RUBÁIYÁT of OMAR KHAYYÁM

TRANSLATED BY
FITZGERALD, WHINFIELD AND McCARTHY

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

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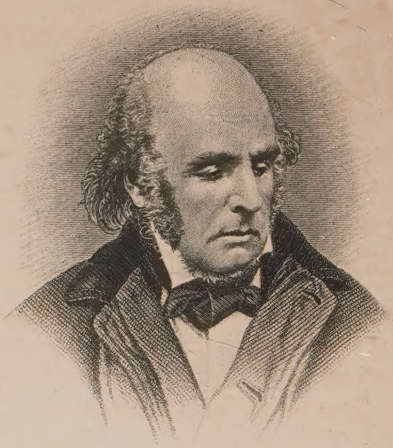

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

Comprising the METRICAL TRANSLATIONS

By EDWARD FITZGERALD *&* E. H. WHINFIELD . *And the Prose Version of* JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

With an Appendix showing the Variations in the First Three Editions of FitzGerald's rendering . Edited, with an Introduction by

JESSIE B. RITTENHOUSE

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INTRODUCTION

IF Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the artist-poet and mystic, had not been lounging one day about the book-stalls of Piccadilly, dipping now into the "farthing" and now into the "penny box," in search of treasure, the "Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám" would doubtless have sunk still deeper under the dusty piles of unsalable old books and waited another decade for a discoverer.

It was already wearing on to a decade since the little quarto pamphlet in its brown paper wrappers — "Beggarly disguise as to paper and print, but magnificent vesture of verse" — had been issued from the press of Mr. Bernard Quaritch at the sum of five shillings, and, failing of buyers, had fallen by natural stages to the ignominy of the "penny box."

The translator had given the two hundred copies as a present to the publisher, a generosity not likely to be appreciated, in view of its results, and had retained fifty copies for distribution among his friends; but as if, on second thought, affrighted at his own boldness, only three of the fifty found their way beyond the study shelves.

"Cowell, to whom I sent a copy," says FitzGerald in one of his letters, "was naturally alarmed at it; he being a very religious man; nor have I given any other copy but to George Borrow, to whom I had once lent the Persian, and to old Donne, when he was down here the other day, to whom I was showing a passage in another book, which brought my old Omar up."

Whether or not the pamphlet that Rossetti bore home from Piccadilly was the first that had been rescued from the penny box, it was at least the first that had made a personal appeal to its buyer. All the imagination of the poet, and his circle of dream-sown spirits, was quickened by it, and in that brotherhood of artists and mystics, styled the "Pre-Raphaelites," the study of the "Rubáiyát" grew into a cult and Omar came at last into his own.

Most enthusiastic of this band of friends, and destined to do most for the vogue of Omar, were the poet Swinburne, and the future Oriental scholar, Captain Richard Burton. To Swinburne, aglow by temperament with the colour, passion, and imagery of the Eastern thought, Omar became a transfused self, so dominating his fancy that he began to write in the Omaric metre; and to Captain, afterward Sir Richard, Burton, he spoke with equal sympathy, so that in the "Lay of the Higher Law" we find an exceedingly Khayyámesque atmosphere, and the free use of several of Omar's best known symbols.

That Omar should fast make his way when once discovered, was in the natural course of things, and in 1868 a new edition was forthcoming, expanded from seventy-five to one hundred and ten quatrains, with the original renderings much modified, and somewhat weakened, perhaps, as twice-wrought things are likely to be. The new quatrains, however, were strong

enough to compensate for the loss of fire and verve in the remodelled ones, and the Omaric cult developed and spread like an infection ; but the translator, the almost shy recluse, who " took as much pains to avoid fame as others did to seek it," remained behind his veil of anonymity, and it was known to very few who delighted in the " Rubáiyát," by whom they had been " Rendered into English Verse."

In 1863 Mr. Ruskin intrusted to Mrs. Burne-Jones, as being the wife of a " Pre-Raphaelite," among whom the Persian quatrains had first been known, a letter addressed, " To the Translator of the Rubáiyát of Omar ; " but it would appear that she herself was no more enlightened upon the matter, for after keeping the letter nearly ten years, she handed it to Mr. Charles Eliot Norton, who had written in the *North American Review* for October 1869 a critique upon the second edition of the " Rubáiyát." If the name of the translator was known to Mr. Norton at that time, at least his " local habitation " was not, and he in turn sent the letter to Thomas Carlyle, who, after a full ten years' interval from the original date, transmitted it to Edward FitzGerald.

The letter of Carlyle to FitzGerald, with the Ruskin and the Norton inclosures, is interesting and characteristic :

Chelsea, 14th April, 1873.

Dear FitzGerald, — Mr. Norton, the writer of that note, is a distinguished American (co-editor for a long time of the *North American*

Review), an extremely amiable, intelligent, and worthy man, with whom I had some pleasant walks, dialogues, and other communications of late months, in the course of which he brought to my knowledge, for the first time, your notable Omar Khayyám, and insisted on giving me a copy from the third edition, which I now possess, and duly prize. From him, too, by careful cross-questioning, I identified beyond dispute the hidden FitzGerald, the translator; and, indeed, found that his complete silence and unique modesty in regard to said meritorious and successful performance was simply a feature of my own Edward F.! The translation is excellent; the book itself a kind of jewel in its way. I do Norton's message without the least delay, as you perceive. Ruskin's message to you passes through my hands sealed. I am ever your affectionate

T. CARLYLE.

But if the discovery of FitzGerald by the public was an accident, no less was the discovery of Omar by FitzGerald himself an accident. Genius stumbles often upon its destined treasure when faring upon some other quest; and the quest with the gentle FitzGerald was fellowship:

"I amuse myself," he wrote to Frederick Tennyson in 1853, "with poking out some Persian, which E. Cowell would inaugurate me with; I go on with it because it is a point in common with him and enables us to study a little together."

His first acquaintance was with Háfiz and Sádi, such examples of their art as are illustrative of the Persian values; but probably from hesitancy to encroach upon the work of his friend Cowell, who was translating Háfiz, as well as from over-modesty in his estimate of himself, he did not at first attempt so ambitious a flight, but addressed himself instead to Jámi, whose

"Salámán and Absál" he transferred, without the loss of Oriental color, to our somewhat colorless tongue, in a manner that merits a reading and a comment that it has not received, especially in the light of its effect upon the subsequent rendering of the "Rubáiyát." In reading Jámi, FitzGerald's hand was broken in to his art, and the essence of the art itself so infused with his own thought that it became no longer art, but temperament, and spoke in the translation of Omar as if an original word. Jámi was a Súfi, and the spirituality of his verse is in striking contrast to the materiality of Omar; but there is a similarity of phrase, and even at times of spirit, that shows what a preparation for the rendering of the one would be the rendering of the other. As, for illustration, Jámi says to the Divine:

"Leave me room
On that Diván which leaves no room for Twain;
Lest, like the simple Arab in the tale,
I grow perplext, Oh God! twixt Me and Thee:
If *I*—this Spirit that inspires me, whence?
If *Thou*—then what this sensual Impotence?"

Is this not in the mood and manner of Omar? and although Jámi believed in—

"Reason that resolves the knot of either world,
And sees beyond the Veil,"

while Omar declares—

"There was a Veil past which I could not see,"

the essential matter is that FitzGerald brought to Omar a perfected touch from the skill with which he

had strung the loose pearls of Jámi on the thread of allegory. Certain sources of FitzGerald's inspiration have been discovered in Attár and Háfiz, but they are none the less to be found in Jámi.

Soon after the publication of "Salámán and Absál," Mr. Cowell removed to Calcutta, where he had been appointed Professor of History at the Presidency College, and in the letters that passed between the friends during the subsequent months of 1856, we begin to find a mention of Omar, who was just beginning to make his appeal to FitzGerald. First, of the copy of the Bodleian manuscript, which FitzGerald made (from the copy transcribed for him originally by Prof. Cowell) and sent with his compliments to Garcin de Tassy, the French student of Oriental literature, who, as soon as he had familiarized himself a bit with it, hastened to write a paper upon Omar for the *Journal Asiatique*, thus winning to France the credit of an earlier acquaintance with the old Persian. It must be acknowledged, however, that he first sent a note to FitzGerald proposing in his paper to mention both the researches of himself and Prof. Cowell into the Persian literature, but again FitzGerald's modesty prompted him to refuse the mention. In a letter to Cowell he says, referring to de Tassy:

"He proposes his writing an article in the *Journal Asiatique* on it in which he will 'honourably mention' E. B. C. and E. F. G. I now write to deprecate all this, putting it on the ground (and a fair one)

that we do not yet know enough of the matter; that I do not wish E. B. C. to be made answerable for errors which E. F. G. (the "copist") may have made; and that E. F. G. neither merits nor desires any honourable mention as a Persian scholar, being none."

After de Tassy had written his paper, in which there is every reason to infer that the discovery of the Bodleian manuscript was his own, he writes to FitzGerald that he has read it before the Persian Ambassador and his suite, who were much pleased with his quotations.

"So you see," he adds, "I have done the part of an ill subject in helping France to ingratiate herself with Persia when England might have had the start." There is something to be said, however, for his frankness, as well as for the alertness of the French ambition.

In the meantime, Edward FitzGerald, in the ease and picturesqueness of his country life, was shaping into exquisite form the Persian quatrains, by repeating them aloud, to test their music and strength, on his solitary walks. Such pictures as these appear from time to time in his letters to his beloved Cowell:

"When in Bedfordshire, I put away almost all books, except Omar Khayyám, which I could not help looking over in a paddock covered with buttercups and brushed by a delicious breeze, while a dainty racing filly of W. Browne's came startling up to wonder and sniff about me.

. . . . . .

"You would be sorry, too, to think that Omar breathes a sort of consolation to me! Poor fellow; I think of him and Oliver Basselin and Anacreon; lighter shadows among the shades, perhaps, over which Lucretius presides so grimly."

In a later letter we come upon this charming passage:

"June over! a thing I think of with Omar-like sorrow, and the roses here are blowing — and going — as abundantly as even in Persia. I am still at Geldestone, and still looking at Omar by an open window, which gives over a greener landscape than yours."

During the preceding month Professor Cowell had sent him a copy of the Calcutta manuscript of the "Rubáiyát," and this had been carefully compared with the Bodleian, to the end that on July 13, 1857, he writes:

"By to-morrow I shall have finished my first Physiognomy of Omar, whom I decidedly prefer to any Persian I have yet seen, unless perhaps Salámán."

Of this "first Physiognomy" he says in the subsequent year, when it had been retouched for publication:

"My translation will interest you from its form, and also in many respects in its detail, very unliteral as it is. Many quatrains are mashed together, and something lost, I doubt, of Omar's simplicity, which is so much a virtue in him. But there it is, such as it is."

FitzGerald's first disposition of the poem was to give it, in January of 1858, to Parker, of *Fraser's Magazine* — that is, what he termed the "less wicked" of the quatrains.

"Since then," he writes to his friend, in September of the same year, "I have heard no more; so, as I suppose, they don't care about it; and may be quite right."

It was evident as time went on that they did not "care about it," and in November he writes again:

"As to Omar, I hear and see nothing of it in *Fraser* yet. . . I told Parker he might find it rather dangerous among his Divines; he took it, however, and keeps it. I really think I shall take it back; add some stanzas which I kept out for fear of being too strong; print fifty copies and give away; one to you, who won't like it neither. Yet it is most ingeniously tesselated into a sort of Epicurean Eclogue in a Persian Garden."

In January we find him informing Cowell that he had recalled the poem, and was to enlarge it to "near as much again of such matter as he would not dare to put in *Fraser*," and print it, which resolve took definite shape, as we have seen, during the late winter of 1859.

While FitzGerald was so careful to conceal his own identity, and put so low a valuation upon his own performance in letters, calling his talent the "feminine of genius," he was still human, and having created a work of art it pained him as much as another that it should come into the world still-born. There is a pathetic note in the following letter to Cowell:

"I sent you poor old Omar, who has his kind of consolation for all these things. I doubt you will regret you ever introduced him to me. . . . I hardly know why I print any of these things, which nobody buys; and I scarce now see the few I give them to. But when one has done one's best, and is sure that that best is better than so many will take pains to do, though far from the best that might be done, one likes to make an end of the matter by print. I suppose very few people have ever taken such pains in translation as I have, though

certainly not to be literal. But, at all cost, a thing must live, with a transfusion of one's own worse life if one can't retain the original's better. Better a live sparrow than a stuffed eagle."

FitzGerald, through the years in which his work was traversing the sliding scale to the penny box, kept hoping that his friend Cowell would edit Omar and thus give the old Persian his rightful place, and the letters of this period are full of reference to the subject. One extract will show his point of view:

"I suppose you would think it a dangerous thing to edit Omar; else, who so proper? Nay, are you not the only man to do it? And he certainly is worth good re-editing. I thought him from the first the most remarkable of the Persian poets, and you keep finding out in him evidences of logical fancy which I had not dreamed of. I dare say these logical riddles are not his best, but they are yet evidence of a strength of mind which our Persian friends rarely exhibit, I think. . . . I doubt I have given but a very one-sided version of Omar; but what I do only comes up as a bubble to the surface and breaks; whereas you, with exact scholarship, might make a lasting impression of such an author."

As a matter of fact Prof. Cowell had written a scholarly paper upon Omar in the *Calcutta Review,* compiled from the texts of the Calcutta and Oxford manuscripts; but this did nothing for the "Rubáiyát" in England, and it was only by biding his time through the nearly ten years' obscurity that FitzGerald had the gratification of seeing his "old Omar" come into congenial fellowship; for it was purely for Omar's sake and not his own that he desired the recognition, inasmuch as the subsequent editions of 1872 and 1879 came out anonymously,

as the first and second had done; and in 1882, the year before his death, we find him writing to Mr. Shütz Wilson, who had proposed contributing a critical paper upon Salámán:

"As to the publication of my name, I believe I could well dispense with it, were it other and better than it is. But I have some unpleasant associations with it; not the least of them being that it was borne, Christian and surname, by a man who left College just when I went there.[1] . . . What has become of him I know not; but he, among other causes, has made me dislike my name, and made me sign myself (half in fun, of course) to my friends, as I now do to you, sincerely yours,

(The Laird of) LITTLEGRANGE."

Almost every incident connected with the gentle FitzGerald is picturesque, from the coasting trips that he used to take with his faithful old boatman aboard his yacht, the "Scandal" — so named because that was the staple amusement of the village — to the walks and talks with Cowell, his "own familiar friend," along the lanes of Woodbridge; and one loves to linger over these associations, but there is a more necessary word to be said in regard to the fidelity of FitzGerald's work in the light of more recent interpretations, both in metre and prose.

It would be wearisome and futile to reopen the controversy that has been so well waged by eminent scholars, with H. G. Keene, Mrs. Cadell and other translators of the "Rubáiyát" declaring that FitzGerald had produced a beautiful poem that is *not* Omar; that there

[1] Edward Marlborough FitzGerald, of unpleasant notoriety.

is, for instance, no "Door of Darkness" in the Persian imagery, and that many other of the most brilliant and daring of FitzGerald's figures have no prototype in the original; and with such scholars as Mr. Charles Eliot Norton and Dr. Talcott Williams taking the middle ground, that it is rather a poetic transfusion than a translation. This is perhaps the most tenable view, but it no longer requires a knowledge of Persian to form one's own opinion with at least approximate accuracy. As will be seen by consulting the bibliography, there are now several English translations of the "Rubáiyát" that may be had in book form, as well as many partial renderings that have appeared in magazines, and by going to the literal prose versions of Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy and Mr. Edward Heron-Allen, one may not only discover for himself the sources of his favourite FitzGerald quatrains, but he may also compare the other poetical renditions with these literal originals. Nothing could be more fascinating.

He will soon discover that FitzGerald was his own best critic, and that when he said that he had "mashed together" many of the "Rubáiyát," he epitomized his whole method of translation — and Omar gains immensely by the process. Even wine, roses, and nightingales cease to appeal when one's senses are steeped in 845 quatrains of them, and not the least charm of FitzGerald's art was its restraint, and its power to distil the essence of a hundred roses into one.

INTRODUCTION

In reading Mr. McCarthy's translation one constantly comes upon passages which he recognizes as from the same original as certain ones of FitzGerald's, but in which the latter has used only part of the thought, discarding the rest, or embodying it in another stanza. For example, Mr. McCarthy thus renders a celebrated quatrain.

"Since life flies, what matters it whether it be sweet or bitter? Since our souls must escape through our lips, what matters it whether it be at Naishápúr or Babylon? Drink, then, for after thou and I are dust the moon will for many days pass from her last to her first quarter, and from her first to her last."

And FitzGerald, seizing the essential spirit of the lines, while discarding the elaboration, turns it into this gem:

> "Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
> Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
> The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
> The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one."

Comparisons need not be multiplied from Mr. McCarthy's version, since one will be enabled in this volume to make such for himself, but the same phase of FitzGerald's work may be considered from the literal rendition of Mr. Edward Heron-Allen, which is not so accessible to American readers. Mr. Heron-Allen says that during twelve years' study both of the Calcutta and Oxford manuscripts, he has been interested in tracing out the originals of FitzGerald's quatrains, or

individual lines, and finds that there are very few lines in the latter's rendering that do not exist more or less closely in the Persian. He has further discovered that the inspiration of several of the stanzas that have puzzled the student of FitzGerald's work, came from the Mantik ut tair of Attār, which he had been studying just prior to his rendering of the "Rubáiyát." He has found in this work the originals of the quatrains beginning, "Oh Thou! who Man of baser Earth didst make," and "Heaven but the vision of fulfilled Desire," also the noble distich,

> "Earth could not answer, nor the Seas that mourn
> In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn."

The scholarly work of Mr. Heron-Allen is full of new light for the lover of Omar, and while he has not aimed at beauty of rendering, a prose translation that follows the original line by line is a most valuable basis for comparative study.

He has confined himself to the quatrains of the Bodleian manuscript, 158 in number, and to follow these and select from them a line here, or a line there, possibly a couplet or an entire quatrain which one recognizes at once as a FitzGerald original, is like building up for oneself a beautiful mosaic.

It is certainly true that FitzGerald largely destroyed the verisimilitude of his work by giving it a continuity that does not exist in Omar. Each quatrain in the

original is a detached thought, and with no consecutive arrangement other than an alphabetical one; whereas in FitzGerald there is a certain unity that has been obtained by selecting fragmentary thoughts and rendering and grouping them so as to form an Oriental poem, rather than a handful of loose gems as in the original. But this arrangement renders it far more delightful to English readers, and when it has been discovered that there exists in Omar a prototype for nearly all of FitzGerald's lines, we have no quarrel with the translator for transposing them to suit his own fancy. It will be interesting to see how close are some of FitzGerald's renditions to the literal, and then to examine a few "mosaics."

Mr. Heron-Allen thus renders a familiar quatrain:

"In great desire I pressed my lips to the lip of the jar,
To inquire from it how long life might be attained;
It joined its lip to mine and whispered: —
'Drink wine, for, to this world, thou returnest not.'"

And FitzGerald says (second edition):

"Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I leaned, the secret Well of Life to learn;
And Lip to Lip it murmur'd — 'While you live,
Drink! — for, once dead, you never shall return.'"

Heron-Allen:

"O soul! if thou canst purify thyself from the dust of the body,
Thou, naked spirit, canst soar in the heavens,
The Empyrean is thy sphere, — let it be thy shame,
That thou comest and art a dweller within the confines of earth."

FitzGerald (second edition):

"Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Is 't not a shame — is 't not a shame for him
So long in this Clay suburb to abide!"

Heron-Allen:

"I saw a potter in the bazaar yesterday,
He was violently pounding the fresh clay,
And that clay said to him, in mystic language,
'I was once like thee — so treat me well.'"

FitzGerald (first edition):

"For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:
And with its all obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd — 'Gently, Brother, gently, pray!'"

Heron-Allen:

"This vault of heaven, beneath which we stand bewildered,
We know to be a sort of magic-lantern:
Know thou that the sun is the lamp-flame and the universe is the lamp,
We are like figures that revolve in it."

FitzGerald (fourth edition):

"We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
Round with the Sun-illumin'd Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show."

And the lovers of a "Book of Verses" will delight in knowing that this sentiment came straight from the heart of Omar. Mr. Heron-Allen thus interprets it:

INTRODUCTION

"I desire a little ruby wine and a book of verses,
Just enough to keep me alive, and half a loaf is needful;
And then, that I and thou should sit in a desolate place
Is better than the kingdom of a sultan."

How near this is, to —

"A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!"

and yet what infinite charm it has gathered from the touch of FitzGerald!

One might go on indefinitely citing close parallels, many in their entirety, like these, but more inlaid piece by piece, as has been mentioned. As an illustration of this constructive process of FitzGerald's we find in Mr. Heron-Allen's version, quatrain 134, this partial prototype:

"This heavenly vault is like a bowl, fallen upside down,
Under which all the wise have fallen captive.
Choose thou the manner of friendship of the goblet and the jar
They are[1] lip to lip, and blood has fallen between them."

And quatrain 41 reads:

"The good and the bad that are in man's nature,
The happiness and misery that are predestined for us —
Do not impute *them* to the heavens, for in the way of wisdom
Those heavens are a thousandfold more helpless than thou art."

[1] The italicized words, the translator explains, do not properly appear in the original, but are inserted by him to render the meaning more intelligible.

FitzGerald, discarding the last two lines of the first quatrain, and the first two of the last, combines the other four in this spirited manner:

> "And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
> Whereunder crawling coop'd, we live and die
> Lift not your hands to *It* for help — for It
> As impotently moves as you or I."

While we have gained a beautiful stanza from this bold transposition, it is certain in this instance that FitzGerald destroys the thought of Omar by such a combination. One more example will suffice to show this process of selection.

Mr. Heron-Allen says:

> "From the beginning was written what shall be;
> Unhaltingly the Pen *writes, and* is heedless of good and bad;
> On the First Day He appointed everything that must be —
> Our grief and our efforts are vain."

This, with complementary thought selected from other quatrains of Omar, has been expanded by FitzGerald into two stanzas, 71 and 73 of the fourth edition:

> "The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
> Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
> Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
> Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> With Earth's first Clay they did the Last Man knead,
> And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
> And the first Morning of Creation wrote
> What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read."

The more widely one studies the different versions, the more is he impressed with the fine discrimination of FitzGerald in the use of Omar's best material, and in the art that could so vitalize the spirit while ignoring so much of the substance.

When so much is omitted, however, there is likely to be but a partial interpretation of the author, and it is obvious in comparing the translations that while FitzGerald has done the old Persian good service in blotting out many of his offences, by silence concerning them, — he has done him an ill service in preserving silence upon some of his virtues. In the translation of Mr. Whinfield, in this volume, and in that of our American scholar, John Leslie Garner, as well as in the rendering of Mrs. Cadell and others, Omar appears to a much better advantage on the spiritual side of things than he does in the stanzas of FitzGerald. It requires little discernment to see that he talked far more than he acted, and that his arraignment of the Deity is largely a bravado to conceal his misgiving and unrest. One cannot hold, however, to the extreme view of Mons. Nicolas that Omar was a Súfi, veiling Divinity under a symbol of Wine; since Omar himself repudiates this assumption by his scorn of the Súfi. The keynote of the "Rubáiyát" is an ironical protest against the ceremonials and doctrines of Súfism. Omar's voice was free, satirical, often defiant; and yet he was driven onward through his "spangle of Existence" by a haunting

desire to know the Secret, to find the "single Alif" that should be the clue to the Master.

Mr. H. G. Keene, who has translated a number of the Rubáiyát, has this redeeming quatrain:

> "If I drink wine it is not for delight,[1]
> Nor unto holiness to do despite;
> I drink to breathe a little, free from self,
> No other cause could make me drink all night."

And Whitely Stokes draws the veil a little further aside:

> "I cannot reach the Road to join with Thee;
> I cannot bear one breath apart from Thee;
> I dare not tell this grief to any man;
> Ah hard! Ah strange! Ah longing sweet for Thee!"

Mr. Whinfield, as will be observed, has many quatrains that show the other self of Omar, and Mr. John Leslie Garner has also penetrated deeply into this unrest. Two Rubáiyát in his rendering may be cited as illustrative:

> "When thee, my soul, in wine's strong chains I bind,
> Who comes to thee upon the desert wind?
> Who is this mighty being who without
> Is none the less the God within thee shrined?
> . . . . . .
> Oh, Allah, grant my wounded heart Thy rest;[2]
> Be merciful unto my grief-torn breast;
> Forgive these feet that bring me to the inn;
> Forgive this hand that takes the vine's bequest."

---

[1] See McCarthy, C XXX; Whinfield, XXXIX.

[2] See McCarthy, CCCC XXIII.

Often, too, in varying phrase, recurs this desire:

> "And now I fain would know if sins of mine
> Can overthrow Thy mercy at the last."

Instead of saying with Mr. Andrew Lang, "No Man so sure as Omar once was sure" we should say, no one so unsure; for Omar is ever groping and never finding, and his abandonment to the senses is always reactionary. It is after he has "eagerly frequented Doctor and Saint," and addressed himself to the "rolling Heaven," and gone in vain "down on the stubborn floor of Earth," — that he finally leans his lip to the "poor earthen Urn" that bids him — "Drink!" He has pondered too much, and in sheer weariness at mysticism and cant, comes back to the old dictum:

> "Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
> Of This and That endeavor and dispute;
> Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
> Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit."

Omar was a hopeless fatalist, yet longing to hope; and inclined, very properly, from a fatalistic standpoint, to lay the blame for this Sorry Scheme of Things upon the One who planned it. Mr. Garner has two strong quatrains in this mood:

> [1]"I am as from Thy Crucible I came,
> A base alloy and conscious of my shame.
> Why should I strive my erring ways to mend?
> 'T is Thine, Oh, Allah, and not mine the blame!

[1] See Whinfield, LVI and CXXVIII.

[1] "Lives there a man who keepeth each decree?—
And if I err, 't is writ Thou chastenest me.
What! if I sin, and in return Thou strikest,
What is the difference between me and Thee."

Had evolution, both natural and spiritual, been demonstrated before Omar's time, we may believe that it would have unlocked the Door to which he "found no Key"; but without Science he could not grasp what was being dimly foreshadowed, and that the Creator should

"From His helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what He lent him dross-allay'd"

was to him only insolence, instead of beneficent law. Taking into account this fatalism, and the retrogression from intellectual and spiritual to material which one finds in Omar, even though stirred, as has been shown, with a high unrest, — there is very little from a philosophical standpoint in his work for the Western world and the Twentieth Century. There are, however, certain eternally modern thoughts, such as that splendid epitome of all philosophy, "I, myself, am Heaven and Hell," that will be a residuum after any analysis.

In bringing into one volume the "Rubáiyát" in three interpretations, one may get much closer to the real nature of the Persian. Mr. Whinfield's translation, having been published only in England, is compara-

[1] See Whinfield, CC XXIX; McCarthy, CCCC XXV.

tively unfamiliar to American readers; but from its acknowledged accuracy as well as art, an acquaintance with it will be interesting and valuable. It was the outgrowth of intimate study of the Persian and other Oriental literature, entered upon while the translator was in the Bengal Service and is especially valuable from the fact that Mr. Whinfield has not only collated the various manuscripts of Omar for the most authentic quatrains, but has carefully sifted from the mass of fugitive Rubáiyát attributed to him those that seem to bear strongest evidence of the master's hand. The quatrains are also translated in their original grouping, and each in its entirety, which renders the work much closer to the original than that of Fitz-Gerald. Mr. Whinfield's translation is well known in England, and has received there the endorsement of all Omaric scholars.

In his preface he discusses at some length the duality of Omar's nature, and concludes that "his philosophical studies would naturally stimulate his skeptical and irreligious disposition, while his mystical leanings would operate mainly in the contrary direction."

"His poems," adds the translator, "were obviously not all written at one period of his life, but from time to time, just as circumstances and mood suggested, and under the influence of the thoughts, passions, and desires which happened to be uppermost at the moment. It may be that the irreligious and Epicurean quatrains were written in youth, and the devotional only in riper years. But this hypothesis seemed to be disproved by Shahrastáni's account of him, which is quite silent as to any such conversion or change of sentiment on his

part, and also by the fact that he describes himself from first to last as a halter between two opinions, and as a backslider in his practice."

The mention of Omar by Shahrastáni, who was born in 479 A.H. and lived for some time at Naishápúr, is interesting from its personal picture of the poet:

"Omar al Khayyám, Imám of Khorásan, and the greatest scholar of his time, was versed in all the learning of the Greeks. He was wont to exhort men to seek the One Author of all by purifying the bodily actions in order to the sanctification of the soul. He also used to recommend the study of Politics as laid down in Greek authors. The later Súfis have caught at the apparent sense of parts of his poems and accommodated them to their own canon, making them a subject of discussion in their assemblies and conventicles, but the esoteric sense consists in axioms of natural religion and principles of universal obligation. When the men of his time anathematized his doctrines, and drew forth his opinions from the concealment in which he had veiled them, he went in fear of his life, and placed some check on the sallies of his tongue and his pen. He made the pilgrimage, but it was from accident rather than piety, still betraying his unorthodox views. On his arrival at Baghdad the men who prosecuted the same ancient studies as he flocked to meet him, but he shut the door in their faces, as one who had renounced those studies and cultivated them no longer. On his return to his native city he made a practice of attending the morning and evening prayers and of disguising his private opinions, but for all that, they were no secret. In astronomy and in all philosophy he was without a rival, and his eminence in those sciences would have passed into a proverb had he only possessed self-control."

In the fact of Omar's wide learning, his studies in youth with the theologian Imám Muaffik, who indoctrinated him with the conception of God as the "Only Real Agent," leaving no room for the determining power of Will; his later familiarity with the Moslem

philosophers and the Súfi mystics, as well as in the skeptical effect of scientific studies upon his thought, — Mr. Whinfield finds the explanation of the two phases of his character, or rather the two habits of his mind, since his character is generally conceded to have been more reputable than some of his Bacchanalian stanzas would give one to infer.

Omar has perhaps had no interpreter who brought to him so much enthusiasm as did Mr. Justin McCarthy; he studied Persian solely that he might know Omar. His rendition, while in prose, is such as to stimulate one's poetic sense; one catches the colour and fancy and sets them to his own rhythm. Whitman says, "The great poems are such as give you to form for yourself poems," and Mr. McCarthy's prose has the qualities of such a poem.

In his delightful preface, still warm with first joy, he describes the effect which the reading of FitzGerald's quatrains had upon him:

"I drank the red wine of Omar," he says, "from the enchanted chalice of FitzGerald and gloried, as joyously as Omar himself, in the intoxication. The book was not mine to keep, but I knew it almost by heart before I parted with it; and I speedily had an Omar of my own. From this Omar with infinite pains I made a small copy which I carried about with me, carried with me in wanderings to Italy, and read and re-read; read in all manner of fair Italian cities, till even now the winds of Verona and the waters of Venice and 'praeceps anio' seem to bear the burden rather of the dear old Persian singer than any echo of Romeo, or Tasso, or Horace. I made myself a kind

of little religion out of Omar; I became a burden to my friends; my writings — for I wrote even in those days — seemed with the persistency of Hotspur's starling to do little save echo the name of Omar.

"From the Omar of FitzGerald's incomparable verse to Omar himself the real Omar in his native Persian was a step, but a hard step. . . . I struggled with the strange script of the East; I became possessed of Mr. Whinfield's edition first, then of Nicolas', the one accompanied by a rendering in English verse, the other by a translation in French prose. With these in such leisure as I could find, and at long intervals, I grappled. My Persian of to-day is at the best but beggarly, but such as it is it has given me infinite pleasure. I have got a little nearer to the great poet of Naishápúr."

In speaking of the recognition of Omar at nearly the same time in France and England, Mr. McCarthy mentions that Théophile Gautier was to the translation of Nicolas, what Swinburne was to that of FitzGerald — its most enthusiastic admirer, and Omar's most ardent devotee.

"Théophile Gautier's words," he says, "help to conjure up a characteristic, delightful picture of Omar Khayyám seated on some wide white terrace at the cool of the day with friends and dancing-girls about him, with cups and jars at hand, with some book of verses hard by, the fair fine Persian script black upon the ivory-tinted vellum all gorgeous with blues and reds and powdered with gold. Here the skimmer of the stars set free his soul, laughed at the mollahs, sang his divine songs and 'Loosed his fingers in the tresses of the cypress-slender minister of wine.' Or we may imagine him walking in some garden red with roses and noisy with nightingales, and meditating upon the doom of youth and beauty and the grinding Wheel of Heaven which reduces Jamshid and Kai Khosrou to Potter's clay and bids tulips spring from the cheeks of perished loveliness. Or yet again reclining in some green place where the lilies blow like the lazy Horatian child of genius, 'By the smooth head of some sacred stream,' with wine and rhymes and a delicious friend.

But always melancholy, as melancholy as Koheleth yesterday, Schopenhauer or Julius Bahnsen to-day, filled indeed with what Renan calls 'la grande curiosité,' but wholly unable to gratify it or stifle it."

Such picturesque visions as these bespeak the sympathetic sight, and it is with this sympathy that Mr. McCarthy approaches Omar.

In presenting these versions of the "Rubáiyát" there is no intention of instituting a literary comparison, but simply of bringing together representative translations from the standpoint of fidelity and beauty; for all must concede that of the many gates by which one may enter Omar's garden, the "Gate which is called Beautiful" remains that opened by Edward FitzGerald.

JESSIE B. RITTENHOUSE.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

The Astronomer-Poet of Persia

Rendered into English Verse by

EDWARD FITZGERALD

TO OMAR KHAYYÁM

WISE Omar, do the Southern Breezes fling
Above your Grave, at ending of the Spring,
The Snowdrift of the Petals of the Rose,
The Wild White Roses you were wont to sing?

Far in the South I know a Land divine,[1]
And there is many a Saint and many a Shrine,
And over all the shrines the Blossom blows
Of Roses that were dear to you as Wine.

You were a Saint of unbelieving Days,
Liking your Life and happy in Men's Praise;
Enough for you the Shade beneath the Bough,
Enough to watch the Wild World go its Ways.

Dreadless and hopeless thou of Heaven or Hell,
Careless of Words thou hadst not Skill to spell,
Content to know not all thou knowest now,
What's Death? Doth any Pitcher dread the Well?

[1] *The hills above San Remo, where rose-bushes are planted by the shrines. Omar desired that his grave might be where the wind would scatter rose-leaves over it.*

The Pitchers we, whose Maker makes them ill,
Shall He torment them if they chance to spill?
Nay, like the broken Potsherds are we cast
Forth and forgotten, — and what will be will!

So still were we, before the Months began
That rounded us and shaped us into Man.
So still we shall *be, surely, at the last,*
Dreamless, untouched of Blessing or of Ban!

Ah, strange it seems that this thy common Thought —
How all Things have been, ay, and shall be nought —
Was ancient Wisdom in thine ancient East,
In those old Days when Senlac fight was fought,

Which gave our England for a captive Land,
To pious Chiefs of a believing Band,
A gift to the Believer from the Priest,
Tossed from the holy to the blood-red Hand![1]

Yea, thou wert singing when that Arrow clave
Through Helm and Brain of him who could not save
His England, even of Harold, Godwin's son;
The high Tide murmurs by the Hero's Grave!

[1] *Omar was contemporary with the Battle of Hastings.*

TO OMAR KHAYYÁM

And thou *wert wreathing Roses—who can tell?—*
Or chanting for some Girl that pleased thee well,
Or satst at wine in Nashâpûr, when dun
The twilight veiled the Field where Harold fell!

The salt Sea-waves above him rage and roam!
Along the white Walls of his guarded Home;
No Zephyr stirs the Rose, but o'er the Wave
The wild Wind beats the Breakers into Foam!

And dear to him, as Roses were to thee,
Rings long the Roar of Onset of the Sea;
The Swan's Path *of his Fathers is his Grave:*
His Sleep, methinks, is sound as thine can be.

His was the Age of Faith, when all the West
Looked to the Priest for Torment or for Rest;
And thou wert living then, and didst not heed
The Saint who banned thee or the Saint who blessed!

Ages of Progress! These eight hundred Years
Hath Europe shuddered with her Hopes or Fears,
And now!—she listens in the Wilderness
To thee, *and half believeth what she hears!*

Hadst thou *THE SECRET? Ah, and who may tell?*
"An Hour we have," thou saidst; "Ah, waste it well!"
An Hour we have, and yet Eternity
Looms o'er us, and the Thought of Heaven or Hell!

Nay, we can never be as wise as thou,
O idle Singer 'neath the blossomed Bough.
Nay, and we cannot be content to die.
We *cannot shirk the Questions "Where?" and "How?"*

Ah, not from learned Peace and gay Content,
Shall we of England go the way he *went—*
The Singer of the Red Wine and the Rose—
Nay, otherwise than his *our Day is spent!*

Serene he dwelt in fragrant Nashâpûr,
But we must wander while the Stars endure,
He *knew the SECRET: we have none that knows,*
No Man so sure as Omar once was sure!

ANDREW LANG.

OMAR KHAYYÁM

The Astronomer-Poet of Persia

OMAR KHAYYÁM was born at Naishápúr in Khorassán in the latter half of our Eleventh, and died within the First Quarter of our Twelfth Century. The slender Story of his Life is curiously twined about that of two other very considerable Figures in their Time and Country: one of whom tells the Story of all Three. This was Nizám ul Mulk, Vizyr to Alp Arslan the Son, and Malik Shah the Grandson, of Toghrul Beg the Tartar, who had wrested Persia from the feeble successor of Mahmúd the Great, and founded that Seljukian Dynasty which finally roused Europe into the Crusades. This Nizám ul Mulk, in his *Wasíyat* — or *Testament* — which he wrote and left as a Memorial for future Statesmen — relates the following, as quoted in the *Calcutta Review*, No. LIX., from Mirkhond's *History of the Assassins*.

"'One of the greatest of the wise men of Khorassán was the Imám Mowaffak of Naishápúr, a man highly honoured and reverenced — may God rejoice his soul; his illustrious years exceeded eighty-five, and it was the universal belief that every boy who read the Koran or studied the traditions in his presence, would assuredly attain to honour and happiness. For this cause did my father send me from Tús to Naishápúr with Abd-us-samad, the doctor of law, that I might employ myself in study and learning under the guidance of that illustrious teacher. Towards me he ever turned

an eye of favour and kindness, and as his pupil I felt for him extreme affection and devotion, so that I passed four years in his service. When I first came there, I found two other pupils of mine own age newly arrived, Hakim Omar Khayyám and the ill-fated Ben Sabbáh. Both were endowed with sharpness of wit and the highest natural powers; and we three formed a close friendship together. When the Imám rose from his lectures, they used to join me, and we repeated to each other the lessons we had heard. Now Omar was a native of Naishápúr, while Hasan Ben Sabbáh's father was one Ali, a man of austere life and practice, but heretical in his creed and doctrine. One day Hasan said to me and to Khayyám, "It is a universal belief that the pupils of the Imám Mowaffak will attain to fortune. Now, even if we *all* do not attain thereto, without doubt one of us will; what, then shall be our mutual pledge and bond?" We answered, "Be it what you please."—"Well," he said, "let us make a vow, that to whomsoever this fortune falls, he shall share it equally with the rest, and reserve no pre-eminence for himself."—"Be it so," we both replied, and on those terms we mutually pledged our words. Years rolled on, and I went from Khorassán to Transoxiana, and wandered to Ghazni and Cabul; and when I returned I was invested with office, and rose to be administrator of affairs during the Sultanate of Sultan Alp Arslán.'

"He goes on to state that years passed by, and both his old school-friends found him out, and came and claimed a share in his good fortune, according to the school-day vow. The Vizier was generous and kept his word. Hasan demanded a place in the government, which the Sultan granted at the Vizier's request; but, discontented with a gradual rise, he plunged into the maze of intrigue of an Oriental Court, and, failing in a base attempt to supplant his benefactor, he was disgraced and fell. After many mishaps and wanderings, Hasan became the head of the Persian sect of the *Ismaílians*, — a party of fanatics who had long murmured in obscurity, but rose to an evil eminence under the guidance of his strong and evil will. In A.D. 1090, he seized the castle of Alamút, in the province of Rúdbar, which lies in the mountainous tract south of the Caspian Sea, and it was from this mountain home he obtained that evil celebrity among the Crusaders as the OLD MAN OF THE MOUNTAINS, and spread terror through the Mohammedan world; and it is yet disputed whether the word *Assassín*, which they have left in the language of modern Europe as their dark memorial, is derived from the *hashísh*, or opiate of hemp-leaves (the Indian *bhang*), with which they maddened themselves to the sullen pitch of Oriental desperation, or from the name of the founder of the dynasty, whom we have seen in his quiet collegiate days, at Naisháṕur. One of the countless victims of

the Assassin's dagger was Nizám ul Mulk himself, the old school-boy friend.[1]

"Omar Khayyám also came to the Vizier to claim his share; but not to ask for title or office. 'The greatest boon you can confer on me,' he said, 'is to let me live in a corner under the shadow of your fortune, to spread wide the advantages of Science, and pray for your long life and prosperity.' The Vizier tells us that, when he found Omar was really sincere in his refusal, he pressed him no further, but granted him a yearly pension of 1200 *míthkáls* of gold, from the treasury of Naishápúr.

"At Naishápúr thus lived and died Omar Khayyám, 'busied,' adds the Vizier, 'in winning knowledge of every kind, and especially in Astronomy, wherein he attained to a very high pre-eminence. Under the Sultanate of Malik Shah, he came to Merv, and obtained great praise for his proficiency in science, and the Sultan showered favours upon him.'

"When Malik Shah determined to reform the calendar, Omar was one of the eight learned men employed to do it; the result was the *Jaláli* era (so called from

[1] Some of Omar's Rubáiyát warn us of the danger of Greatness, the instability of Fortune, and while advocating Charity to all Men, recommending us to be too intimate with none. Attár makes Nizám ul Mulk use the very words of his friend Omar [Rub. xxviii.], "When Nizám ul Mulk was in the Agony (of Death) he said, 'Oh God! I am passing away in the hand of the Wind.'"

Jalál-ud-dín, one of the king's names) — 'a computation of time,' says Gibbon, 'which surpasses the Julian, and approaches the accuracy of the Gregorian style.' He is also the author of some astronomical tables, entitled Zíji-Maliksháhí," and the French have lately republished and translated an Arabic Treatise of his on Algebra.

"His Takhallus or poetical name (Khayyám) signifies a Tentmaker, and he is said to have at one time exercised that trade, perhaps before Nizám ul Mulk's generosity raised him to independence. Many Persian poets similarly derive their names from their occupations; thus we have Attár, 'a druggist,' Assár, 'an oil presser,' etc.[1] Omar himself alludes to his name in the following whimsical lines: —

'Khayyám, who stitched the tents of science,
Has fallen in grief's furnace and been suddenly burned;
The shears of Fate have cut the tent ropes of his life,
And the broker of Hope has sold him for nothing!'

"We have only one more anecdote to give of his Life, and that relates to the close; it is told in the anonymous preface which is sometimes prefixed to his poems; it has been printed in the Persian in the Appendix to Hyde's *Veterum Persarum Religio*, p. 499;

[1] Though all these, like our Smiths, Archers, Millers, Fletchers, etc., may simply retain the Surname of an hereditary calling.

and D'Herbelot alludes to it in his Bibliothèque, under *Khiam:* —[1]

"'It is written in the chronicles of the ancients that this King of the Wise, Omar Khayyám, died at Naishápúr in the year of the Hegira, 517 (A. D. 1123); in science he was unrivalled — the very paragon of his age. Khwájah Nizámi of Samarcand, who was one of his pupils, relates the following story: "I often used to hold conversations with my teacher, Omar Khayyám, in a garden; and one day he said to me, 'My tomb shall be in a spot where the north wind may scatter roses over it.' I wondered at the words he spake, but I knew that his were no idle words.[2]

[1] "Philosophe Musulman qui a vécu en Odeur de Sainteté dans sa Religion, vers la Fin du premier et le Commencement du second Siècle," no part of which, except the "Philosophe," can apply to our Khayyám.

[2] The Rashness of the Words, according to D'Herbelot, consisted in being so opposed to those in the Korán: "No Man knows where he shall die!" — This story of Omar reminds me of another so naturally — and when one remembers how wide of his humble mark the noble sailor aimed — so pathetically told by Captain Cook — not by Doctor Hawkesworth — in his Second Voyage (i. 374). When leaving Ulietea, "Oreo's last request was for me to return. When he saw he could not obtain that promise, he asked the name of my *Marai* (burying-place). As strange a question as this was, I hesitated not a moment to tell him 'Stepney,' the parish in which I live when in London. I was made to repeat it several times over till they could pronounce it; and then 'Stepney Marai no Toote' was echoed through an hundred mouths at once. I afterwards found the same question had been put to Mr. Forster by a man on shore; but he

Years after, when I chanced to revisit Naishápúr, I went to his final resting-place, and lo! it was just outside a garden, and trees laden with fruit stretched their boughs over the garden wall, and dropped their flowers upon his tomb, so that the stone was hidden under them.'' ''

Thus far — without fear of Trespass — from the *Calcutta Review*. The writer of it, on reading in India this story of Omar's Grave, was reminded, he says, of Cicero's Account of finding Archimedes' Tomb at Syracuse, buried in grass and weeds. I think Thorwaldsen desired to have roses grow over him; a wish religiously fulfilled for him to the present day, I believe. However, to return to Omar.

Though the Sultan "shower'd Favours upon him," Omar's Epicurean Audacity of Thought and Speech caused him to be regarded askance in his own Time and Country. He is said to have been especially hated and dreaded by the Súfis, whose Practice he ridiculed, and whose Faith amounts to little more than his own, when stript of the Mysticism and formal recognition of Islamism under which Omar would not hide. Their Poets, including Háfiz, who are (with the exception of Firdausi) the most considerable in Persia, borrowed largely, indeed, of Omar's material, but turning it to

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gave a different and indeed more proper answer, by saying, 'No man who used the sea could say where he should be buried.' "

a mystical Use more convenient to Themselves and the People they addressed; a People quite as quick of Doubt as of Belief; as keen of Bodily Sense as of Intellectual; and delighting in a cloudy composition of both, in which they could float luxuriously between Heaven and Earth, and this World and the Next, on the wings of a poetical expression, that might serve indifferently for either. Omar was too honest of Heart as well as of Head for this. Having failed (however mistakenly) of finding any Providence but Destiny, and any World but This, he set about making the most of it; preferring rather to soothe the Soul through the Senses into Acquiescence with Things as he saw them, than to perplex it with vain disquietude after what they *might* be. It has been seen, however, that his Worldly Ambition was not exorbitant; and he very likely takes a humorous or perverse pleasure in exalting the gratification of Sense above that of the Intellect, in which he must have taken great delight, although it failed to answer the Questions in which he, in common with all men, was most vitally interested.

For whatever Reason, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own Country, and therefore has been but scantily transmitted abroad. The MSS. of his Poems, mutilated beyond the average Casualties of Oriental Transcription, are so rare in the East as scarce to have reached Westward at all, in spite of all the acquisitions of Arms and Science.

There is no copy at the India House, none at the Bibliothèque Nationale of Paris. We know of but one in England: No. 140 of the Ouseley MSS. at the Bodleian, written at Shiráz, A.D. 1460. This contains but 158 Rubáiyát. One in the Asiatic Society's Library at Calcutta (of which we have a Copy), contains (and yet incomplete) 516, though swelled to that by all kinds of Repetition and Corruption. So Von Hammer speaks of *his* Copy as containing about 200, while Dr. Sprenger catalogues the Lucknow MS. at double that number.[1] The Scribes, too, of the Oxford and Calcutta MSS. seem to do their Work under a sort of Protest; each beginning with a Tetrastich (whether genuine or not), taken out of its alphabetical order; the Oxford with one of Apology; the Calcutta with one of Expostulation, supposed (says a Notice prefixed to the MS.) to have arisen from a Dream, in which Omar's mother asked about his future fate. It may be rendered thus: —

"Oh Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn
In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn;
How long be crying, 'Mercy on them, God!'
Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?"

The Bodleian Quatrain pleads Pantheism by way of Justification.

[1] "Since this paper was written" (adds the Reviewer in a note), "we have met with a Copy of a very rare Edition, printed at Calcutta in 1836. This contains 438 Tetrastichs, with an Appendix containing 54 others not found in some MSS."

"If I myself upon a looser Creed
Have loosely strung the Jewel of Good deed,
Let this one thing for my Atonement plead:
That One for Two I never did mis-read."

The Reviewer,[1] to whom I owe the Particulars of Omar's Life, concludes his Review by comparing him with Lucretius, both as to natural Temper and Genius, and as acted upon by the Circumstances in which he lived. Both indeed were men of subtle, strong, and cultivated Intellect, fine Imagination, and Hearts passionate for Truth and Justice; who justly revolted from their Country's false Religion, and false, or foolish, Devotion to it; but who fell short of replacing what they subverted by such better *Hope* as others, with no better Revelation to guide them, had yet made a Law to themselves. Lucretius, indeed, with such material as Epicurus furnished, satisfied himself with the theory of a vast machine fortuitously constructed, and acting by a Law that implied no Legislator; and so composing himself into a Stoical rather than Epicurean severity of Attitude, sat down to contemplate the mechanical Drama of the Universe which he was part Actor in; himself and all about him (as in his own sublime description of the Roman Theatre) discoloured with the lurid reflex of the Curtain suspended between the Spectator and the Sun. Omar, more desperate, or more careless of any so complicated System as re-

[1] Professor Cowell.

sulted in nothing but hopeless Necessity, flung his own Genius and Learning with a bitter or humorous jest into the general Ruin which their insufficient glimpses only served to reveal; and, pretending sensual pleasure as the serious purpose of Life, only *diverted* himself with speculative problems of Deity, Destiny, Matter and Spirit, Good and Evil, and other such questions, easier to start than to run down, and the pursuit of which becomes a very weary sport at last!

With regard to the present Translation. The original Rubáiyát (as, missing an Arabic Guttural, these *Tetrastichs* are more musically called) are independent Stanzas, consisting each of four Lines of equal, though varied, Prosody; sometimes *all* rhyming, but oftener (as here imitated) the third line a blank. Somewhat as in the Greek Alcaic, where the penultimate line seems to lift and suspend the Wave that falls over in the last. As usual with such kind of Oriental Verse, the Rubáiyát follow one another according to Alphabetic Rhyme — a strange succession of Grave and Gay. Those here selected are strung into something of an Eclogue, with perhaps a less than equal proportion of the "Drink and make-merry," which (genuine or not) recurs over-frequently in the Original. Either way, the Result is sad enough: saddest perhaps when most ostentatiously merry: more apt to move Sorrow than Anger toward the old Tentmaker, who, after vainly endeavouring to unshackle his Steps from Destiny, and

to catch some authentic Glimpse of To-morrow, fell back upon To-day (which has outlasted so many To-morrows!) as the only Ground he had got to stand upon, however momentarily slipping from under his Feet.

[*From the Third Edition.*]

While the second Edition of this version of Omar was preparing, Monsieur Nicolas, French Consul at Resht, published a very careful and very good Edition of the Text, from a lithograph copy at Teheran, comprising 464 Rubáiyát, with translation and notes of his own.

Mons. Nicolas, whose Edition has reminded me of several things, and instructed me in others, does not consider Omar to be the material Epicurean that I have literally taken him for, but a Mystic, shadowing the Deity under the figure of Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., as Háfiz is supposed to do; in short, a Súfi poet like Háfiz and the rest.

I cannot see reason to alter my opinion, formed as it was more than a dozen years ago[1] when Omar was first shown me by one to whom I am indebted for all I know of Oriental, and very much of other, literature. He admired Omar's Genius so much, that he would have adopted any such Interpretation of his meaning

[1] [This was written in 1868.]

as Mons. Nicolas's if he could.[1] That he could not, appears by his Paper in the *Calcutta Review* already so largely quoted: in which he argues from the Poems themselves, as well as from what records remain of the Poet's Life.

And if more were needed to disprove Mons. Nicolas's Theory, there is the Biographical Notice which he himself has drawn up in direct contradiction to the Interpretation of the Poems given in his Notes. (See pp. xiii.–xiv. of his Preface.) Indeed I hardly knew poor Omar was so far gone till his Apologist informed me. For here we see that, whatever were the Wine that Háfiz drank and sang, the veritable Juice of the Grape it was which Omar used, not only when carousing with his friends, but (says Mons. Nicolas) in order to excite himself to that pitch of Devotion which others reached by cries and "hurlemens." And yet, whenever Wine, Wine-bearer, etc., occur in the text — which is often enough — Mons. Nicolas carefully annotates "Dieu," "La Divinité," etc.: so carefully indeed that one is tempted to think that he was indoctrinated by the Súfi with whom he read the Poems. (Note to Rub. ii. p. 8.) A Persian would naturally wish to vindicate a distinguished Countryman; and a Súfi to enrol

[1] Perhaps would have edited the Poems himself some years ago. He may now as little approve of my Version on one side, as of Mons. Nicolas's Theory on the other.

him in his own sect, which already comprises all the chief poets in Persia.

What historical Authority has Mons. Nicolas to show that Omar gave himself up "avec passion à l'étude de la philosophie des Soufis"? (Preface, p. xiii.) The Doctrines of Pantheism, Materialism, Necessity, etc., were not peculiar to the Súfi; nor tô Lucretius before them; nor to Epicurus before him; probably the very original Irreligion of Thinking men from the first; and very likely to be the spontaneous growth of a Philosopher living in an Age of social and political barbarism, under shadow of one of the Two-and-Seventy Religions supposed to divide the world. Von Hammer (according to Sprenger's Oriental Catalogue) speaks of Omar as "a Free-thinker, and *a great opponent of Sufism;*" perhaps because, while holding much of their Doctrine, he would not pretend to any inconsistent severity of morals. Sir W. Ouseley has written a note to something of the same effect on the fly-leaf of the Bodleian MS. And in two Rubáiyát of Mons. Nicolas's own Edition Súf and Súfi are both disparagingly named.

No doubt many of these Quatrains seem unaccountable unless mystically interpreted; but many more as unaccountable unless literally. Were the Wine spiritual, for instance, how wash the Body with it when dead? Why make cups of the dead clay to be filled with—"La Divinité"—by some succeeding Mystic?

Mons. Nicolas himself is puzzled by some "bizarres" and "trop Orientales" allusions and images — "d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante" indeed — which "les convenances" do not permit him to translate; but still which the reader cannot but refer to "La Divinité."[1] No doubt also many of the Quatrains in the Teheran, as in the Calcutta, Copies are spurious; such *Rubáiyát* being the common form of Epigram in Persia. But this, at best, tells as much one way as another; nay, the Súfi, who may be considered the Scholar and Man of Letters in Persia, would be far more likely than the careless Epicure to interpolate what favours his own view of the Poet. I observe that very few of the more mystical Quatrains are in the Bodleian MS., which must be one of the oldest, as dated at Shiráz, A. H. 865, A. D. 1460. And this, I think, especially distinguishes Omar (I cannot help calling him by his — no, not Christian — familiar name)

[1] A Note to Quatrain 234 admits that, however clear the mystical meaning of such Images must be to Europeans, they are not quoted without "rougissant" even by laymen in Persia — "Quant aux termes de tendresse qui commencent ce quatrain, comme tant d'autres dans ce recueil, nos lecteurs, habitués maintenant à l'étrangeté des expressions si souvent employées par Khéyam pour rendre ses pensées sur l'amour divin, et à la singularité de ses images trop orientales, d'une sensualité quelquefois révoltante, n'auront pas de peine à se persuader qu'il s'agit de la Divinité, bien que cette conviction soit vivement discutée par les moullahs musulmans et même par beaucoup de laïques, qui rougissent véritablement d'une pareille licence de leur compatriote à l'égard des choses spirituelles."

from all other Persian Poets: That, whereas with them the Poet is lost in his Song, the Man in Allegory and Abstraction; we seem to have the Man—the *Bonhomme*—Omar himself, with all his Humours and Passions, as frankly before us as if we were really at Table with him, after the Wine had gone round.

I must say that I, for one, never wholly believed in the Mysticism of Háfiz. It does not appear there was any danger in holding and singing Súfi Pantheism, so long as the Poet made his Salaam to Mohammed at the beginning and end of his Song. Under such conditions Jeláluddín, Jámí, Attár, and others sang; using Wine and Beauty indeed as Images to illustrate, not as a Mask to hide, the Divinity they were celebrating. Perhaps some Allegory less liable to mistake or abuse had been better among so inflammable a People: much more so when, as some think with Háfiz and Omar, the abstract is not only likened to, but identified with, the sensual Image; hazardous, if not to the Devotee himself, yet to his weaker Brethren; and worse for the Profane in proportion as the Devotion of the Initiated grew warmer. And all for what? To be tantalized with Images of sensual enjoyment which must be renounced if one would approximate a God, who, according to the Doctrine, *is* Sensual Matter as well as Spirit, and into whose Universe one expects unconsciously to merge after Death, without hope of any posthumous Beatitude in another world to compensate

for all one's self-denial in this. Lucretius's blind Divinity certainly merited, and probably got, as much self-sacrifice as this of the Súfi; and the burden of Omar's Song — if not "Let us eat" — is assuredly — "Let us drink, for To-morow we die!" And if Háfiz meant quite otherwise by a similar language, he surely miscalculated when he devoted his Life and Genius to so equivocal a Psalmody as, from his Day to this, has been said and sung by any rather than Spiritual Worshippers.

However, as there is some traditional presumption, and certainly the opinion of some learned men, in favour of Omar's being a Súfi — and even something of a Saint — those who please may so interpret his Wine and Cup-bearer. On the other hand, as there is far more historical certainty of his being a Philosopher of scientific Insight and Ability far beyond that of the Age and Country he lived in; of such moderate worldly Ambition as becomes a Philosopher, and such moderate wants as rarely satisfy a Debauchee; other readers may be content to believe with me that, while the Wine Omar celebrates is simply the Juice of the Grape, he bragged more than he drank of it, in very defiance perhaps of that Spiritual Wine which left its Votaries sunk in Hypocrisy or Disgust.

THE RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

I

WAKE! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n, and strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II

Before the phantom of False morning died,
Methought a Voice within the Tavern cried,
"When all the Temple is prepared within,
Why nods the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

III

And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before
The Tavern shouted—"Open then the Door!
You know how little while we have to stay,
And, once departed, may return no more."

IV

Now the New Year reviving old Desires,
The thoughtful Soul to Solitude retires,
Where the WHITE HAND OF MOSES on the Bough
Puts out, and Jesus from the Ground suspires.

V

Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose,
And Jamshyd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still a Ruby kindles in the Vine,
And many a Garden by the Water blows.

VI

And David's lips are lockt; but in divine
High-piping Pehleví, with "Wine! Wine! Wine!
Red Wine!" — the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That sallow cheek of hers to' incarnadine.

VII

Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring
Your Winter-garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To flutter — and the Bird is on the Wing.

VIII

Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon,
Whether the Cup with sweet or bitter run,
The Wine of Life keeps oozing drop by drop,
The Leaves of Life keep falling one by one.

IX

Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;
Yes, but where leaves the Rose of Yesterday?
And this first Summer month that brings the Rose
Shall take Jamshyd and Kaikobád away.

X

Well, let it take them! What have we to do
With Kaikobád the Great, or Kaikhosrú?
Let Zál and Rustum bluster as they will,
Or Hátim call to Supper — heed not you.

XI

With me along the strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán is forgot —
And Peace to Mahmúd on his golden Throne!

XII

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread — and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness —
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

XIII

Some for the Glories of This World; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

XIV

Look to the blowing Rose about us — "Lo,
Laughing," she says, "into the world I blow,
At once the silken tassel of my Purse
Tear, and its Treasure on the Garden throw."

XV

And those who husbanded the Golden grain,
And those who flung it to the winds like Rain,
Alike to no such aureate Earth are turn'd
As, buried once, Men want dug up again.

XVI

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon,
Like Snow upon the Desert's dusty Face,
Lighting a little hour or two — is gone.

XVII

Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Portals are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his destined Hour, and went his way.

XVIII

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep:
And Bahrám, that great Hunter — the Wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his Sleep.

XIX

I sometimes think that never blows so red
The Rose as where some buried Cæsar bled;
That every Hyacinth the Garden wears
Dropt in her Lap from some once lovely Head.

XX

And this reviving Herb whose tender Green
Fledges the River-Lip on which we lean —
Ah, lean upon it lightly! for who knows
From what once lovely Lip it springs unseen!

XXI

Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears
TO-DAY of past Regrets and Future Fears:
To-morrow! — Why, To-morrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n thousand Years.

XXII

For some we loved, the loveliest and the best
That from his Vintage rolling Time hath prest,
Have drunk their Cup a Round or two before,
And one by one crept silently to rest.

XXIII

And we, that now make merry in the Room
They left, and Summer dresses in new bloom,
Ourselves must we beneath the Couch of Earth
Descend — ourselves to make a Couch — for whom?

XXIV

Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend,
Before we too into the Dust descend;
Dust into Dust and under Dust to lie,
Sans Wine, sans Song, sans Singer, and — sans End!

XXV

Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare,
And those that after some TO-MORROW stare,
A Muezzín from the Tower of Darkness cries,
"Fools! your Reward is neither Here nor There."

XXVI

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely — they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

XXVII

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door where in I went.

XXVIII

With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow,
And with mine own hand wrought to make it grow;
And this was all the Harvest that I reap'd —
"I came like Water, and like Wind I go."

XXIX

Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing
Nor *Whence*, like Water willy-nilly flowing;
And out of it, as Wind along the Waste,
I know not *Whither*, willy-nilly blowing.

XXX

What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*
And, without asking, *Whither* hurried hence!
Oh, many a Cup of this forbidden Wine
Must drown the memory of that insolence!

XXXI

Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate
I rose, and on the Throne of Saturn sate,
And many a Knot unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Master-knot of Human Fate.

XXXII

There was the Door to which I found no Key;
There was the Veil through which I might not see:
Some little talk awhile of ME and THEE
There was — and then no more of THEE and ME.

XXXIII

Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn
In flowing Purple, of their Lord forlorn;
  Nor rolling Heaven, with all his Signs reveal'd
And hidden by the sleeve of Night and Morn.

XXXIV

Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil, I lifted up my hands to find
  A Lamp amid the Darkness; and I heard,
As from Without—"THE ME WITHIN THEE BLIND!"

XXXV

Then to the Lip of this poor earthen Urn
I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn:
  And Lip to Lip it murmur'd—"While you live,
Drink!—for, once dead, you never shall return."

XXXVI

I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
  And drink; and Ah! the passive Lip I kiss'd,
How many Kisses might it take—and give!

XXXVII

For I remember stopping by the way
To watch a Potter thumping his wet Clay:
  And with its all-obliterated Tongue
It murmur'd — "Gently, Brother, gently, pray!"

XXXVIII

And has not such a Story from of Old
Down Man's successive generations roll'd
  Of such a clod of saturated Earth
Cast by the Maker into Human mould?

XXXIX

And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
For Earth to drink of, but may steal below
  To quench the fire of Anguish in some Eye
There hidden — far beneath, and long ago.

XL

As then the Tulip for her morning sup
Of Heav'nly Vintage from the soil looks up,
  Do you devoutly do the like, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you — like an empty Cup.

XLI

Perplext no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to the winds resign,
  And lose your fingers in the tresses of
The Cypress-slender Minister of Wine.

XLII

And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in — Yes;
  Think then you are TO-DAY what YESTERDAY
You were — TO-MORROW you shall not be less.

XLIII

So when that Angel of the darker Drink
At last shall find you by the river-brink,
  And, offering his Cup, invite your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff — you shall not shrink.

XLIV

Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
  Wer' 't not a Shame — wer' 't not a Shame for him
In this clay carcase crippled to abide?

XLV

'T is but a Tent where takes his one day's rest
A Sultán to the realm of Death addrest;
The Sultán rises, and the dark Ferrásh
Strikes, and prepares it for another Guest.

XLVI

And fear not lest Existence closing your
Account, and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Sákí from that Bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and will pour.

XLVII

When You and I behind the Veil are past,
Oh, but the long, long while the World shall last,
Which of our Coming and Departure heeds
As the Sea's self should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII

A Moment's Halt — a momentary taste
Of BEING from the Well amid the Waste —
And Lo! — the phantom Caravan has reacht
The NOTHING it set out from — Oh, make haste!

XLIX

Would you that spangle of Existence spend
About THE SECRET — quick about it, Friend!
A Hair perhaps divides the False and True —
And upon what, prithee, may life depend?

L

A Hair perhaps divides the False and True;
Yes; and a single Alif were the clue —
Could you but find it — to the Treasure-house,
And peradventure to THE MASTER too;

LI

Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins
Running Quicksilver-like eludes your pains;
Taking all shapes from Máh to Máhi; and
They change and perish all — but He remains;

LII

A moment guess'd — then back behind the Fold
Immerst of Darkness round the Drama roll'd
Which, for the Pastime of Eternity,
He doth Himself contrive, enact, behold.

LIII

But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor
Of Earth, and up to Heav'n's unopening Door,
You gaze TO-DAY, while You are You — how then
TO-MORROW, You when shall be You no more?

LIV

Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute;
Better be jocund with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV

You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse
I made a Second Marriage in my house;
Divorced old barren Reason from my Bed,
And took the Daughter of the Vine to Spouse.

LVI

For "IS" and "IS-NOT" though with Rule and Line
And "UP-AND-DOWN" by Logic I define,
Of all that one should care to fathom, I
Was never deep in anything but — Wine.

LVII

Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Reduced the Year to better reckoning? — Nay,
'T was only striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow, and dead Yesterday.

LVIII

And lately, by the Tavern Door agape,
Came shining through the Dusk an Angel Shape
Bearing a Vessel on his Shoulder; and
He bid me taste of it; and 't was — the Grape!

LIX

The Grape that can with Logic absolute
The Two-and-Seventy jarring Sects confute:
The sovereign Alchemist that in a trice
Life's leaden metal into Gold transmute:

LX

The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters before him with his whirlwind Sword.

LXI

Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare
Blaspheme the twisted tendril as a Snare?
A Blessing, we should use it, should we not?
And if a Curse — why, then, Who set it there?

LXII

I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must,
Scared by some After-reckoning ta'en on trust,
Or lured with Hope of some Diviner Drink,
To fill the Cup — when crumbled into Dust!

LXIII

Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!
One thing at least is certain — *This* Life flies;
One thing is certain and the rest is Lies;
The Flower that once has blown for ever dies.

LXIV

Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who
Before us pass'd the door of Darkness through,
Not one returns to tell us of the Road,
Which to discover we must travel too.

LXV

The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd
Who rose before us, and as Prophets burn'd,
  Are all but Stories, which, awoke from Sleep
They told their comrades, and to Sleep return'd.

LXVI

I sent my Soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
  And by and by my Soul return'd to me,
And answer'd "I Myself am Heav'n and Hell:"

LXVII

Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow from a Soul on fire,
  Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves,
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

LXVIII

We are no other than a moving row
Of Magic Shadow-shapes that come and go
  Round with the Sun-illumined Lantern held
In Midnight by the Master of the Show;

LXIX

But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays
Upon this Chequer-board of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves, and checks, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

LXX

The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all — HE knows — HE knows!

LXXI

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.

LXXII

And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop'd we live and die,
Lift not your hands to *It* for help — for It
As impotently moves as you or I.

LXXIII

With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead,
And there of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
And the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LXXIV

YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare;
TO-MORROW'S Silence, Triumph, or Despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came, nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.

LXXV

I tell you this — When, started from the Goal,
Over the flaming shoulders of the Foal
Of Heav'n Parwín and Mushtarí they flung,
In my predestin'd Plot of Dust and Soul

LXXVI

The Vine had struck a fibre: which about
If clings my being — let the Dervish flout;
Of my Base metal may be filed a Key
That shall unlock the Door he howls without.

LXXVII

And this I know: whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or Wrath-consume me quite,
One Flash of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXVIII

What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke
A conscious Something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted Pleasure, under pain
Of Everlasting Penalties, if broke!

LXXIX

What! from his helpless Creature be repaid
Pure Gold for what he lent him dross-allay'd—
Sue for a Debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer—Oh the sorry trade!

LXXX

Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin
Beset the Road I was to wander in,
Thou wilt not with Predestined Evil round
Enmesh, and then impute my Fall to Sin!

LXXXI

Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
For all the Sin wherewith the Face of Man
Is blacken'd — Man's forgiveness give — and take!

* * * * * * *

LXXXII

As under cover of departing Day
Slunk hunger-stricken Ramazán away,
Once more within the Potter's house alone
I stood, surrounded by the Shapes of Clay.

LXXXIII

Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small,
That stood along the floor and by the wall;
And some loquacious Vessels were; and some
Listen'd perhaps, but never talk'd at all.

LXXXIV

Said one among them — "Surely not in vain
My substance of the common Earth was ta'en
And to this Figure moulded, to be broke,
Or trampled back to shapeless Earth again."

LXXXV

Then said a Second — "Ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in joy;
And He that with his hand the Vessel made
Will surely not in after Wrath destroy."

LXXXVI

After a momentary silence spake
Some Vessel of a more ungainly Make;
"They sneer at me for leaning all awry:
What! did the Hand then of the Potter shake?"

LXXXVII

Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot —
I think a Súfi pipkin — waxing hot —
"All this of Pot and Potter — Tell me then,
Who is the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

LXXXVIII

"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to Hell
The luckless Pots he marr'd in making — Pish!
He 's a Good Fellow, and 't will all be well."

LXXXIX

"Well," murmur'd one, "Let whoso make or buy,
My Clay with long Oblivion is gone dry:
But fill me with the old familiar Juice,
Methinks I might recover by and by."

XC

So while the Vessels one by one were speaking,
The little Moon look'd in that all were seeking:
And then they jogg'd each other, "Brother! Brother!
Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

* * * * * * *

XCI

Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash the Body whence the Life has died,
And lay me, shrouded in the living Leaf,
By some not unfrequented Garden-side.

XCII

That ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare
Of Vintage shall fling up into the Air
As not a True-believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII

Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my credit in this World much wrong:
Have drown'd my Glory in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

XCIV

Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before
I swore — but was I sober when I swore?
And then and then came Spring, and Rose-in-hand
My thread-bare Penitence apieces tore.

XCV

And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel,
And robb'd me of my Robe of Honour — Well,
I wonder often what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the stuff they sell.

XCVI

Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows!

XCVII

Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield
One glimpse — if dimly, yet indeed, reveal'd,
To which the fainting Traveller might spring,
As springs the trampled herbage of the field!

XCVIII

Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late
Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
And make the stern Recorder otherwise
Enregister, or quite obliterate!

XCIX

Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits — and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!

* * * * * * *

C

Yon rising Moon that looks for us again —
How oft hereafter will she wax and wane;
How oft hereafter rising look for us
Through this same Garden — and for *one* in vain!

CI

And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in your joyous errand reach the spot
Where I made One — turn down an empty Glass!

TAMÁM

NOTES BY EDWARD FITZGERALD

[*The references are, except in the first note only, to the stanzas of the Fourth Edition.*] *The numbering is the same as in the Fifth Edition.*

(Stanza I.) Flinging a Stone into the Cup was the signal for "To Horse!" in the Desert.

(II.) The *"False Dawn;" Subhi Kázib*, a transient Light on the Horizon about an hour before the *Subhi sádik*, or True Dawn; a well-known Phenomenon in the East.

(IV.) New Year. Beginning with the Vernal Equinox, it must be remembered; and (howsoever the old Solar Year is practically superseded by the clumsy *Lunar* Year that dates from the Mohammedan Hijra) still commemorated by a Festival that is said to have been appointed by the very Jamshyd whom Omar so often talks of, and whose yearly Calendar he helped to rectify.

"The sudden approach and rapid advance of the Spring," says Mr. Binning, "are very striking. Before the Snow is well off the Ground, the Trees burst into Blossom, and the Flowers start from the Soil. At *Now Rooz* (*their* New Year's Day) the Snow was lying in patches on the Hills and in the shaded Vallies, while the Fruit-trees in the Gardens were budding beautifully, and green Plants and Flowers springing up on the Plains on every side —

> 'And on old Hyems' Chin and icy Crown
> An odorous Chaplet of sweet Summer buds
> Is, as in mockery, set.' —

Among the Plants newly appeared I recognized some old Acquaintances I had not seen for many a Year: among these, two varieties of the Thistle; a coarse species of Daisy, like the 'Horse-gowan'; red and white Clover; the Dock; the blue Corn-flower; and that vulgar Herb the Dandelion rearing its yellow crest on the Banks of the Water-courses." The Nightingale was not yet heard, for the Rose was not yet blown: but an almost identical Blackbird and Woodpecker helped to make up something of a North-country Spring.

"The White Hand of Moses." Exodus iv. 6; where Moses draws forth his Hand — not, according to the Persians, *"leprous as Snow,"* — but *white*, as our May-blossom in Spring perhaps. According to them also the Healing Power of Jesus resided in his Breath.

(V.) Iram, planted by King Shaddád, and now sunk somewhere in the Sands of Arabia. Jamshyd's Seven-ring'd Cup was typical of the 7 Heavens, 7 Planets, 7 Seas, &c., and was a *Divining Cup.*

(VI.) *Pehlevi,* the old Heroic *Sanskrit* of Persia. Háfiz also speaks of the Nightingale's *Pehlevi,* which did not change with the People's.

I am not sure if the fourth line refers to the Red Rose looking sickly, or to the Yellow Rose that ought to be Red; Red, White, and Yellow Roses all common in Persia. I think that Southey, in his Common-Place Book, quotes from some Spanish author about the Rose being White till 10 o'clock; "Rosa Perfecta" at 2; and "perfecta incarnada" at 5.

(X.) Rustum, the "Hercules" of Persia, and Zál his Father, whose exploits are among the most celebrated in the Sháh-náma. Hátim Tai, a well-known type of Oriental Generosity.

(XIII.) A Drum — beaten outside a Palace.

(XIV.) That is, the Rose's Golden Centre.

(XVIII.) Persepolis; call'd also *Takht-i-Jamshyd* — The Throne of Jamshyd, *"King Splendid,"* of the mythical *Peshdádian* Dynasty, and supposed (according to the Sháh-náma) to have been founded and built by him. Others refer it to the Work of the Genie King, Ján Ibn Ján — who also built the Pyramids — before the time of Adam.

Bahrám Gúr — *Bahram of the Wild Ass* — a Sassanian Sovereign — had also his Seven Castles (like the King of Bohemia!) each of a different Colour: each with a Royal Mistress within; each of whom tells him a Story, as told in one of the most famous Poems of Persia, written by Amír Khusraw: all these Sevens also figuring (according to Eastern Mysticism) the Seven Heavens; and perhaps the Book itself that Eighth, into which the mystical Seven transcend, and within which they revolve. The Ruins of Three of those Towers are yet shown by the Peasantry; as also the Swamp in which Bahrám sunk, like the Master of Ravenswood, while pursuing his *Gúr.*

NOTES

The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,
And Kings the forehead on his threshold drew —
I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
And "Coo coo, coo," she cried; and "Coo, coo, coo."

This Quatrain Mr. Binning found, among several of Háfiz and others, inscribed by some stray hand among the ruins of Persepolis. The Ringdove's ancient *Pehlevi Coo, Coo, Coo,* signifies also in Persian *"Where? Where? Where?"* In Attár's "Bird-parliament" she is reproved by the Leader of the Birds for sitting still, and for ever harping on that one note of lamentation for her lost Yúsuf.

Apropos of Omar's Red Roses in Stanza xix, I am reminded of an old English Superstition, that our Anemone Pulsatilla, or purple "Pasque Flower" (which grows plentifully about the Fleam Dyke, near Cambridge), grows only where Danish Blood has been spilt.

(XXI.) A thousand years to each Planet.

(XXXI.) Saturn, Lord of the Seventh Heaven.

(XXXII.) ME-AND-THEE: some dividual Existence or Personality distinct from the Whole.

(XXXVII.) One of the Persian Poets — Attár, I think — has a pretty story about this. A thirsty Traveller dips his hand into a Spring of Water to drink from. By-and-by comes another who draws up and drinks from an earthen Bowl, and then departs, leaving his Bowl behind him. The first Traveller takes it up for another draught; but is surprised to find that the same Water which had tasted sweet from his own hand tastes bitter from the earthen Bowl. But a Voice — from Heaven, I think — tells him the clay from which the Bowl is made was once *Man;* and, into whatever shape renewed, can never lose the bitter flavour of Mortality.

(XXXIX.) The custom of throwing a little Wine on the ground before drinking still continues in Persia, and perhaps generally in the East. Mons. Nicolas considered it "un signe de libéralité, et en même temps un avertissement que le buveur doit vider sa coupe

jusqu'à la dernière goutte." Is it not more likely an ancient Superstition; a Libation to propitiate Earth, or make her an Accomplice in the illicit Revel? Or, perhaps, to divert the Jealous Eye by some sacrifice of superfluity, as with the Ancients of the West? With Omar we see something more is signified; the precious Liquor is not lost, but sinks into the ground to refresh the dust of some poor Wine-worshipper foregone.

Thus Háfiz, copying Omar in so many ways: "When thou drinkest Wine pour a draught on the ground. Wherefore fear the Sin which brings to another Gain?"

(XLIII.) According to one beautiful Oriental Legend, Azräel accomplishes his mission by holding to the nostril an Apple from the Tree of Life.

This and the two following Stanzas would have been withdrawn, as somewhat *de trop,* from the Text, but for advice which I least like to disregard.

(LI.) From Máh to Máhi; from Fish to Moon.

(LVI.) A Jest, of course, at his Studies. A curious mathematical Quatrain of Omar's has been pointed out to me; the more curious because almost exactly parallel'd by some Verses of Doctor Donne's, that are quoted in Izaak Walton's Lives! Here is Omar: "You and I are the image of a pair of compasses; though we have two heads (sc. our *feet*) we have one body; when we have fixed the centre for our circle, we bring our heads (sc. feet) together at the end." Dr. Donne: —

"If we be two, we two are so
As stiff twin-compasses are two;
Thy Soul, the fixt foot, makes no show
To move, but does if the other do.

"And though thine in the centre sit,
Yet when my other far does roam,
Thine leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as mine comes home.

NOTES

"Such thou must be to me, who must
Like the other foot obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
And me to end where I begun."

(LIX.) The Seventy-two Religions supposed to divide the World, *including* Islamism, as some think: but others not.

(LX.) Alluding to Sultan Mahmúd's Conquest of India and its dark people.

(LXVIII.) *Fánúsí khíyál*, a Magic-lantern still used in India; the cylindrical Interior being painted with various Figures, and so lightly poised and ventilated as to revolve round the lighted Candle within.

(LXX.) A very mysterious Line in the Original:—

O dánad O dánad O dánad O——

breaking off something like our Wood-pigeon's Note, which she is said to take up just where she left off.

(LXXV.) Parwín and Mushtarí — The Pleiads and Jupiter.

(LXXXVII.) This Relation of Pot and Potter to Man and his Maker figures far and wide in the Literature of the World, from the time of the Hebrew Prophets to the present; when it may finally take the name of "Pot theism," by which Mr. Carlyle ridiculed Sterling's "Pantheism." *My* Sheikh, whose knowledge flows in from all quarters, writes to me:—

"Apropos of old Omar's Pots, did I ever tell you the sentence I found in 'Bishop Pearson on the Creed'? 'Thus are we wholly at the disposal of His will, and our present and future condition framed and ordered by His free, but wise and just decrees. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?* (Rom. ix. 21.) And can that earth-artificer have a freer power over his *brother potsherd* (both being made of the same metal), than God hath over him, who, by the

strange fecundity of His omnipotent power, first made the clay out of nothing, and then him out of that?'"

And again — from a very different quarter: — "I had to refer the other day to Aristophanes, and came by chance on a curious Speaking-pot story in the Vespæ, which I had quite forgotten.

Φιλοκλέων.	Ἄκουε, μὴ φεῦγ'· ἐν Συβάρει γυνή ποτε κατέαξ' ἐχῖνον.	l. 1435
Κατήγορος.	Ταῦτ' ἐγὼ μαρτύρομαι.	
Φι.	Οὐχῖνος οὖν ἔχων τιν' ἐπεμαρτύρατο· Εἶθ' ἡ Συβαρῖτις εἶπεν, εἰ ναὶ τὰν κόραν τὴν μαρτυρίαν ταύτην ἐάσας, ἐν τάχει ἐπίδεσμον ἐπρίω, νοῦν ἂν εἶχες πλείονα.	

"The Pot calls a bystander to be a witness to his bad treatment. The woman says, 'If, by Proserpine, instead of all this 'testifying' (comp. Cuddie and his mother in 'Old Mortality'!) you would buy yourself a rivet, it would show more sense in you!' The Scholiast explains *echínus* as ἄγγος τι ἐκ κεράμου."

One more illustration for the oddity's sake from the "Autobiography of a Cornish Rector," by the late James Hamley Tregenna, 1871.

"There was one old Fellow in our Company — he was so like a Figure in the '*Pilgrim's Progress*' that Richard always calls him the 'ALLEGORY,' with a long white beard — a rare Appendage in those days — and a Face the colour of which seemed to have been baked in, like the Faces one used to see on Earthenware Jugs. In our Country-dialect Earthenware is called '*Clome*'; so the Boys of the Village used to shout after him — 'Go back to the Potter, old Clome-face, and get baked over again.' For the 'Allegory,' though shrewd enough in most things, had the reputation of being '*saift-baked*,' i.e., of weak intellect."

(XC.) At the Close of the Fasting Month, Ramazán (which makes the Musulman unhealthy and unamiable), the first Glimpse of the New Moon (who rules their division of the Year) is looked for with

the utmost Anxiety, and hailed with Acclamation. Then it is that the Porter's Knot may be heard — toward the *Cellar*. Omar has elsewhere a pretty Quatrain about the same Moon: —

"Be of Good Cheer — the sullen Month will die,
And a young Moon requite us by and by:
Look how the Old One, meagre, bent, and wan
With Age and Fast, is fainting from the Sky!"

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT OF THE FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD EDITIONS OF FITZGERALD'S TRANSLATION

I[1]
1st Ed. Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight:
And Lo! the Hunter of the East has caught
The Sultán's Turret in a Noose of Light.

2d Ed. Wake! For the Sun behind yon Eastern height
Has chased the Session of the Stars from Night;
And, to the field of Heav'n ascending, strikes
The Sultán's Turret with a Shaft of Light.

II
1st Ed. Dreaming when Dawn's Left Hand was in the Sky
I heard a Voice within the Tavern cry,
"Awake, my Little ones, and fill the Cup
Before Life's Liquor in its Cup be dry."

2d Ed. "Why lags the drowsy Worshipper outside?"

V
1st Ed. Irám indeed is gone with all its Rose,
And Jamshýd's Sev'n-ring'd Cup where no one knows;
But still the Vine her ancient Ruby yields,
And still a Garden by the Water blows.

2d & 3d Eds. But still a Ruby gushes from the Vine,

VI
1st Ed. "*Red* Wine!"—the Nightingale cries to the Rose
That yellow Cheek of her's to' incarnadine.

VII
1st Ed. Come, fill the Cup, and in the Fire of Spring
The Winter Garment of Repentance fling:
The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo! the Bird is on the Wing.

IX
1st Ed. And look—a thousand Blossoms with the Day
Woke—and a thousand scatter'd into Clay:

2d Ed. Morning a thousand Roses brings, you say;

[1] Variations are numbered according to the quatrains of the Fourth Edition.

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

X
1st Ed. But come with old Khayyám, and leave the Lot
Of Kaikobád and Kaikhosrú forgot!
Let Rustum lay about him as he will,
Or Hátim Tai cry Supper—heed them not.

2d Ed. Let Rustum cry "To Battle!" as he likes,
Or Hátim Tai "To Supper!" heed not you.

3d Ed. Let Zál and Rustum thunder as they will,

XI
1st Ed. With me along some Strip of Herbage strown
That just divides the desert from the sown,
Where name of Slave and Sultán scarce is known,
And pity Sultán Máhmúd on his Throne.

XII
1st Ed. Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the Bough,
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.

2d Ed. Here with a little Bread beneath the Bough,

XIII
1st Ed. "How sweet is mortal Sovranty!"—think some:
Others—"How blest the Paradise to come!"
Ah, take the Cash in hand and waive the Rest;
Oh, the brave Music of a *distant* Drum!

2d Ed. Ah, take the Cash, and let the Promise go,
Nor heed the music of a distant Drum!

XIV
1st Ed. Look to the Rose that blows about us—"Lo,"

XVI
2d Ed. Lighting a little hour or two—was gone.

XVII
1st Ed. Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai
Whose Doorways are alternate Night and Day,
How Sultán after Sultán with his Pomp
Abode his Hour or two, and went his way.

XVIII Stamps o'er his Head, and he lies fast asleep.
1st Ed.

XIX Dropt in its Lap from some once lovely Head.
1st Ed.

XX And this delightful Herb whose tender Green
1st Ed. Fledges the River's Lip on which we lean—

2d Ed. And this delightful Herb whose living Green

XXI *"To-morrow?"* for *"To-morrow!"*
1st Ed.

XXII Lo! some we loved, the loveliest and best
1st Ed. That Time and Fate of all their Vintage prest,

XXIII "Bloom," for "bloom."
1st Ed.

XXV And those that after a TO-MORROW stare,
1st Ed.

XXVI Of the Two Worlds so learnedly, are thrust
1st & 2d Eds.

XXVII Came out by the same Door as in I went.
1st & 2d Eds.

XXVIII And with my own hand labour'd it to grow:
1st Ed.

2d & 3d Eds. And with my own hand wrought to make it grow:

XXX Another and another Cup to drown
1st Ed. The Memory of this Impertinence!

2d Ed. Ah, contrite Heav'n endowed us with the Vine
To drug the memory of that insolence!

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

XXXI
1st Ed. And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;
But not the Knot of Human Death and Fate.

2d Ed. And many Knots unravel'd by the Road;

XXXII
1st Ed. There was a Door to which I found no Key:
There was a Veil past which I could not see:
Some little Talk awhile of ME AND THEE
There seem'd — and then no more of THEE AND ME.

XXXIV
1st Ed. Then to the rolling Heav'n itself I cried,
Asking, "What Lamp had Destiny to guide
Her little Children stumbling in the Dark?"
And — "A blind Understanding!" Heav'n replied.

2d Ed. Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind
The Veil of Universe I cried to find
A Lamp to guide me through the darkness; and
Something then said — "An Understanding blind."

XXXV
1st Ed. Then to this earthen Bowl did I adjourn
My Lip the secret Well of Life to learn:

2d Ed. I lean'd, the secret Well of Life to learn:

XXXVI
1st Ed. I think the Vessel, that with fugitive
Articulation answer'd, once did live,
And merry-make; and the cold Lip I kiss'd
How many Kisses might it take — and give!

2d Ed. And that impassive Lip I kiss'd

XXXVII
1st Ed. For in the Market-place, one Dusk of Day,
I watch'd the Potter thumping his wet Clay:

XXXVIII
3d Ed. Listen — a moment listen! Of the same
Poor Earth from which that Human Whisper came,
The luckless Mould in which Mankind was cast
They did compose, and call'd him by the name.

XXXIX
2d Ed.
And not a drop that from our Cups we throw
On the parcht herbage but may steal below

XL
2d Ed.
As then the Tulip for her wonted sup
Of Heavenly Vintage lifts her chalice up,
Do you, twin offspring of the soil, till Heav'n
To Earth invert you like an empty Cup.

XLI
2d Ed.
Oh, plagued no more with Human or Divine,
To-morrow's tangle to itself resign,

XLII
1st Ed.
And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press,
End in the Nothing all Things end in — Yes —
Then fancy while Thou art, Thou art but what
Thou shalt be — Nothing — Thou shalt not be less.

2d Ed.
And if the Cup you drink, the Lip you press,
End in what All begins and ends in — Yes;
Imagine then you *are* what heretofore
You *were* — hereafter you shall not be less.

XLIII
1st Ed.
While the Rose blows along the River Brink,
With old Khayyám the Ruby Vintage drink:
And when the Angel with his darker Draught
Draws up to Thee — take that, and do not shrink.

2d Ed.
So when at last the Angel of the drink
Of Darkness finds you by the river-brink,
And, proffering his Cup, invites your Soul
Forth to your Lips to quaff it — do not shrink.

XLIV
From
Preface to
1st Ed.
Oh, if my Soul can fling his Dust aside,
And naked on the Air of Heaven ride,
Is't not a Shame, is't not a Shame for Him
So long in this Clay Suburb to abide!

2d Ed.
Is't not a shame — is't not a shame for him
So long in this Clay Suburb to abide!

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

XLV
From Preface to 1st Ed.

Or is *that* but a Tent, where rests anon
A Sultán to his Kingdom passing on,
And which the swarthy Chamberlain shall strike
Then when the Sultán rises to be gone?

2d Ed.

But that is but a Tent wherein may rest

XLVI
2d Ed.

And fear not lest Existence closing *your*
Account, should lose, or know the type no more;

XLVII
2d Ed.
3d Ed.

As much as Ocean of a pebble-cast.

As the Sev'n Seas should heed a pebble-cast.

XLVIII
1st Ed.

One Moment in Annihilation's Waste,
One Moment, of the Well of Life to taste —
The Stars are setting and the Caravan
Starts for the Dawn of Nothing — Oh make haste!

2d Ed.

Draws to the Dawn of Nothing — Oh, make haste!

XLIX
2d Ed.

A Hair, they say, divides the False and True —
And upon what, prithee, does Life depend?

LII
2d & 3d Eds.

"Does," instead of "doth."

LIV
1st Ed.

How long, how long, in infinite Pursuit
Of This and That endeavour and dispute?
Better be merry with the fruitful Grape
Than sadden after none, or bitter, Fruit.

LV
1st Ed.

You know, my Friends, how long since in my House
For a new Marriage I did make Carouse:

2d Ed.

You know, my Friends, how bravely in my House

LVI
1st Ed.

For "IS and IS-NOT" though *with* Rule and Line,
And "UP-AND-DOWN" *without*, I could define,
I yet in all I only cared to know,
Was never deep in anything but — Wine.

LVII
1st Ed.
Ah, fill the Cup: — what boots it to repeat
How Time is slipping underneath our Feet:
Unborn TO-MORROW and dead YESTERDAY,
Why fret about them if TO-DAY be sweet!

2d Ed.
Ah, but my Computations, People say,
Have squared the Year to Human Compass, eh?
If so, by striking from the Calendar
Unborn To-morrow and dead Yesterday.

LVIII
1st Ed.
"Stealing" for "shining."

LIX
1st Ed.
"Subtle" for "sovereign."

LX
1st Ed.
The mighty Mahmúd, the victorious Lord,
That all the misbelieving and black Horde
Of Fears and Sorrows that infest the Soul
Scatters and slays with his enchanted Sword.

LXII
2d Ed.
When the frail Cup is crumbled into Dust!

LXIII
1st Ed.
Oh, come with old Khayyám, and leave the Wise
To talk; one thing is certain, that Life flies;

2d Ed.
"Is blown" for "has blown."

LXV
2d & 3d Eds.
"Fellows" for "comrades."

LXVI
2d Ed.
And after many days my Soul return'd
And said, "Behold, Myself am Heav'n and Hell:"

LXVII
2d & 3d Eds.
And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,

LXVIII
1st Ed.
For in and out, above, about, below,
'T is nothing but a Magic Shadow-show,
Play'd in a Box whose Candle is the Sun,
Round which we Phantom Figures come and go.

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

2d Ed. Of visionary Shapes that come and go
Round with this Sun-illumin'd Lantern held

LXIX
1st Ed. 'T is all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Men for Pieces plays:
Hither and thither moves, and mates, and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.

2d & 3d Eds. Impotent Pieces of the Game He plays

LXX
1st Ed. The Ball no Question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Right or Left, as strikes the Player goes;
And He that toss'd Thee down into the Field,
He knows about it all — HE knows — HE knows!

2d & 3d Eds. The same, with the substitution of "you" for "Thee" in third line.

LXXI
1st Ed. "Thy" for "your" in second and fourth lines.

LXXII
1st Ed. And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to *It* for help — for It
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.

2d & 3d Eds. As impotently rolls as you or I.

LXXIII
1st Ed. With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man's knead,
And then of the Last Harvest sow'd the Seed:
Yea, the first Morning of Creation wrote
What the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read.

LXXV
1st Ed. I tell Thee this — When, starting from the Goal,
Over the shoulders of the flaming Foal, etc.

LXXVI
1st Ed. The Vine had struck a Fibre; which about
If clings my Being — let the Súfi flout;

LXXVII
1st Ed.
And this I know: whether the one True Light,
Kindle to Love, or Wrathconsume me quite,
One Glimpse of It within the Tavern caught
Better than in the Temple lost outright.

LXXIX
2d & 3d Eds.
Pure Gold for what he lent us dross-allay'd —
Sue for a Debt we never did contract,

LXXX
1st Ed.
Thou wilt not with Predestination round
Enmesh me, and impute my Fall to Sin?

LXXXI
1st Ed.
And who with Eden didst devise the Snake;

2d Ed.
For all the Sin the Face of wretched Man
Is black with — Man's Forgiveness give — and take!

LXXXII
1st Ed.
Listen again. One Evening at the Close
Of Ramazán, ere the better Moon arose,
In that old Potter's Shop I stood alone
With the clay Population round in Rows.

LXXXIII
2d Ed.
And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
Whisper among them; as it were, the stirr'd
Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

LXXXIV
1st Ed.
Then said another — "Surely not in vain
My Substance from the common Earth was ta'en,
That He who subtly wrought me into Shape
Should stamp me back to common Earth again."

2d Ed.
"Should stamp me back to shapeless Earth again?"

LXXXV
1st Ed.
Another said — "Why, ne'er a peevish Boy,
Would break the Bowl from which he drank in Joy;
Shall He that *made* the Vessel in pure Love
And Fansy, in an after Rage destroy!

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

2d Ed. Another said — "Why, ne'er a peevish Boy
Would break the Cup from which he drank in Joy;
Shall He that of his own free Fancy made
The Vessel, in an after-rage destroy!"

LXXXVI 1st Ed. None answer'd this; but after Silence spake
A Vessel of a more ungainly Make:

LXXXVII 1st Ed. And, strange to tell, among that Earthen Lot
Some could articulate, while others not:
And suddenly one more impatient cried —
"Who *is* the Potter, pray, and who the Pot?"

2d Ed. Thus with the Dead as with the Living, *What?*
And *Why?* so ready, but the *Wherefor* not,
One on a sudden peevishly exclaim'd,
"Which is the Potter, pray, and which the Pot?"

LXXXVIII 1st Ed. Said one — "Folks of a surly Tapster tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
They talk of some strict Testing of us — Pish!
He's a Good Fellow, and 't will all be well."

2d Ed. Said one — "Folks of a surly Master tell,
And daub his Visage with the Smoke of Hell;
They talk of some sharp Trial of us — Pish!

LXXXIX 1st Ed. Then said another with a long-drawn Sigh,

2d Ed. "Well," said another, "Whoso will, let try,"

XC 1st Ed. One spied the little Crescent all were seeking:
. . . . . .
"Hark to the Porter's Shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

2d & 3d Eds. (As the above, excepting the fourth line)
"Now for the Porter's shoulder-knot a-creaking!"

XCI
1st Ed. Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide,
And wash my Body whence the Life has died,
And in a Windingsheet of Vine-leaf wrapt,
So bury me by some sweet Garden-side.

XCII
1st Ed. That ev'n my buried Ashes such a Snare
Of Perfume shall fling up into the Air,
As not a True Believer passing by
But shall be overtaken unaware.

XCIII
1st Ed. Indeed the Idols I have loved so long
Have done my Credit in Men's Eye much wrong:
Have drown'd my Honour in a shallow Cup,
And sold my Reputation for a Song.

2d & 3d Eds. Have done my credit in Men's eye much wrong:

XCV
1st Ed. I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the Goods they sell.

2d Ed. I often wonder what the Vintners buy
One half so precious as the ware they sell.

XCVI
1st Ed. Alas, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented Manuscript should close!

XCVII
2d Ed. Toward which the fainting Traveller might spring,

XCVIII
2d Ed. Oh if the World were but to re-create,
That we might catch ere closed the Book of Fate,
And make The Writer on a fairer leaf
Inscribe our names, or quite obliterate!

XCIX
1st Ed. Ah Love! could thou and I with Fate conspire

2d Ed. Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

C
1st Ed.
Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me — in vain!

2d Ed.
But see! The rising Moon of Heav'n again
Looks for us, Sweet-heart, through the quivering Plane:
How oft hereafter rising will she look
Among those leaves — for one of us in vain!

CI
1st Ed.
And when Thyself with shining Foot shall pass
Among the Guests Star-scatter'd on the Grass,
And in thy joyous Errand reach the Spot
Where I made one — turn down an empty Glass!

2d & 3d Eds.
And when Yourself with silver Foot shall pass

3d Ed.
And in your blissful errand reach the spot

QUATRAINS PRINTED IN THE SECOND EDITION ONLY

XIV

Were it not Folly, Spider-like to spin
The Thread of present Life away to win —
What? for ourselves, who know not if we shall
Breathe out the very Breath we now breathe in!

XX

The Palace that to Heav'n his pillars threw,
The Kings the forehead on his threshold drew —
I saw the solitary Ringdove there,
And "Coo, coo, coo," she cried; and "Coo, coo, coo."

XXVIII

Another Voice, when I am sleeping, cries,
"The Flower should open with the Morning skies."
And a retreating Whisper, as I wake—
"The Flower that once has blown forever dies."

XLIV

Do you, within your little hour of Grace,
The waving Cypress in your Arms enlace,
Before the Mother back into her arms
Fold, and dissolve you in a last embrace.

LXV

If but the Vine and Love-abjuring Band
Are in the Prophet's Paradise to stand,
Alack, I doubt the Prophet's Paradise
Were empty as the hollow of one's Hand.

LXXVII

For let Philosopher and Doctor preach
Of what they will and what they will not—each
Is but one Link in an eternal Chain
That none can slip, nor break, nor over-reach.

LXXXVI

Nay, but, for terror of his wrathful Face,
I swear I will not call Injustice Grace;
Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but
Would kick so poor a Coward from the place.

XC[1]

And once again there gather'd a scarce heard
Whisper among them; as it were, the stirr'd
Ashes of some all but extinguisht Tongue,
Which mine ear kindled into living Word.

[1] In the Third and Fourth Editions, Quatrain LXXXIII. takes the place of this.

VARIATIONS IN THE TEXT

XCIX

Whither resorting from the vernal Heat
Shall Old Acquaintance Old Acquaintance greet,
Under the Branch that leans above the Wall
To shed his Blossom over head and feet.

CVII

Better, oh better, cancel from the Scroll
Of Universe one luckless Human Soul,
Than drop by drop enlarge the Flood that rolls
Hoarser with Anguish as the Ages roll.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

Translated into English Prose by

JUSTIN HUNTLY MCCARTHY

OMAR KHAYYÁM

By JUSTIN HUNTLY McCARTHY

OMAR, dear Sultán of the Persian Song,
Familiar Friend whom I have loved so long,
Whose Volume made my pleasant Hiding-place
From this fantastic World of Right and Wrong.

My Youth lies buried in thy Verses: lo,
I read, and as the haunted Numbers flow,
My Memory turns in anguish to the Face
That leaned o'er Omar's pages long ago.

Alas for Me, alas for all who weep
And wonder at the Silence dark and deep
That girdles round this little Lamp in space
No wiser than when Omar fell asleep.

Rest in thy Grave beneath the crimson rain
Of heart-desired Roses. Life is vain,
And vain the trembling Legends we may trace
Upon the open Book that shuts again.

The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám

I

SINCE it is the fate of man upon this hateful earth to feed on sorrow and to vex his soul, he must be accounted happy who departs swiftly from the world, but he most happy who never comes into the world.

II

The secret of Eternity is far from thee and me; the word of the enigma is unknown to thee and me; behind the veil is speech of thee and me; but if the veil be rent, what haps to thee and me?

III

Without clear wine I cannot live; without the wine-cup I cannot lift the load of life; I am the slave of that fair hour when the cup-bearer bids me drain yet another cup and I cannot.

IV

The rose said, "I am the Yusuf flower, for my mouth is full of gold and jewels." I said, "If thou art the Yusuf flower, show me a certain sign thereof." And she made answer, "Perchance that I am garbed in a blood-drenched garment."

V

Long time I sought in this shifting world for a moment's halting-place. I spent in my endeavours all my wit, and lo! I learn that the moon is but a pallid wheel beside thy beauty, that the cypress, by thy slender form, seems a grotesque deformity.

VI

Yea, drink wine, for by him who is far-seeing as I am, it will be found that in the eyes of the Deity the act is of small account. God from all time has foreseen that I should drink wine. If I drank not, this fore-knowledge would become ignorance, or I should not fulfil His fore-knowledge.

VII

Rise and come hither, and for mine heart's ease solve at least one problem: bring swiftly here a flask of ancient wine, that we may drink our fill before folk make flagons of our clay.

VIII

When I am dead, wash me with vintage juice; instead of prayers recite over my tomb hymnals of wine and flagons, and if you seek me at the latter day, look for me in the dust upon the tavern threshold.

IX

Since no man dares play prophet for to-morrow, hasten to lift thy heavy laden heart. Drain, O delightful moon, a crimson cup, for Heaven's moon will turn a weary while and fail to find us.

X

Let the lucky lover be drunk from year's end to year's end, drenched in wine and garbed in shame; for when we are wise and wide-awake sorrow assaults us from all quarters, but no sooner are we drunk than we laugh at fortune.

XI

In Heaven's name, why does the philosopher set his heart upon the trophies of this house of many sorrows? Let him who calls me drunkard clear his eyes and tell me if he sees on high even the sign of a tavern.

XII

Every morn I say, this shall be the night of repentance, repentance from the flagon, and from the bowl brimming over, repentance. Yet now that the season of roses has come set me free in the time of the rose from repentance, O Lord of repentance!

XIII

Speak sooth, thou Little Wheel, what have I done to thee, that thus, beaten and persecuted, I should be driven by thee to beg my bread from town to town and find my draught in the flowing stream?

XIV

I passed by where a potter kneaded earth and I beheld what he did not behold, that it was my father's dust which lay in the palm of that potter.

XV

Man is like unto a flagon and his soul is the wine therein: his mould is like unto a reed, and his soul is the sound therein. What is earthly man, O Khayyám, but a paper lantern of fancy and a lamp therein.

XVI

Since life seldom answers to our heart's desire, of what avail are all our hopes and all our strivings? Our spirits are always vexed, always are we saying in sighing, "Too late we came, too soon we must depart."

XVII

Since the Heavenly Wheel and Fate have never been your friends, why should you reck whether the Heavens be seven or eight? There are, I say again, two days for which I take no thought, the day which has not come, and the day which has gone for ever.

XVIII

O Khayyám, why so much mourning for your sin? What consolation can you find in thus plaguing yourself? He who has never sinned can never taste the sweet of forgiveness. Mercy was made for the sake of sin, therefore why are you afraid?

XIX

No one has ever passed behind the veil that masks the secrets of God. No one shall ever pass behind it; there is no other dwelling-place for us than the bosom of the earth. Woe's me that this secret, too, should be so short.

XX

I myself will pour wine into a cup which containeth a full measure. Two cups thereof will content me, but I will immediately three times divorce from me religion and reason, and wed the daughter of the vine.

XXI

Oh, my beloved, full of graces and witcheries, seat thyself; and thus, quenching the flames of a thousand desires rise not up again. Thou forbiddest me to gaze upon thee, but thou might as well command me to turn down the cup, without spilling the contents thereof.

XXII

Seek the company of men of righteousness and understanding, and fly a thousand leagues from a man without wit. If a wise man giveth thee poison, fear not to drink thereof, but if a fool offereth thee an antidote, pour it out upon the earth.

XXIII

My well beloved, may her days be long as my sorrows, is kind to me again. She cast upon me a sweet and fleeting glance, and straightway vanished, saying, no doubt, "Let me do good and cast it on the water."

XXIV

The Koran, which men call the Holy Word, is none the less read only from time to time, and not with steadfast study, while on the lip of the cup there runs a luminous verse which we love to read always and ever.

McCARTHY VERSION

XXV

You who drink no wine, blame not the bibbers, for I would liefer renounce Heaven than renounce the juice of the grape. You plume yourself upon your temperance, but this false glory sits vilely on one who commits deeds a thousand times more vile than honest drunkenness.

XXVI

Although my body may be comely, although its odour may be suave, although my colour may mock the tulip, and my figure shame the cypress, it is not clear to me, nevertheless, why my Heavenly painter has deigned to limn me on this world.

XXVII

I wish to drink so deep, so deep of wine that its fragrance may hang about the soil where I shall sleep, and that revellers, still dizzy from last night's wassail, shall, on visiting my tomb, from its very perfume fall dead drunk.

XXVIII

In the kingdom of hope win all the hearts you can, in the kingdom of the presence, bind to thyself a perfect soul, for, be sure, a hundred Kaabas, blent of earth and water, are not worth a single heart. Give then thy Kaaba the go-by, and seek a heart instead.

XXIX

Oh, wheel of fate, destruction falls from thy unconquerable hate. Tyranny has been thy purpose and thy pleasure from the beginning of things. And thou too, O earth, if we but digged into thy breast, what treasures should we not find therein!

XXX

When our blood beats quickest with joy of the green earth, when the steeds of the sun sweep over the green earth, I love to wander with lovely girls upon the green earth, making merry together before we are all turned to green earth.

XXXI

Every day when dawn appears, I will hasten to the tavern with the cheating kalendars.[1] Then, thou that art Lord of the deepest secrets of man's heart, give me faith, if thou wouldest that I put faith in prayer.

XXXII

Never, alas, do we drink with delight one drop of clear water without at the same time draining the bowl of bitter wine from the hand of sorrow. Never do we sharpen the savour of bread with the savour of salt without feeding upon our own hearts.

XXXIII

Take a grip of the Koran with one hand; have a clutch at the cup with the other, and tremble between the lawful and the unlawful. So shall we sit beneath the vaulted sky neither wholly believers nor wholly infidel.

XXXIV

We should keep all our secrets from the indiscreet, from the very nightingale we should hide them. Think then, O Heaven, upon the harm you wreak upon poor human hearts in forcing them thus to hide from each other's eyes.

XXXV

O Cup-Bearer, since Time lurks hard by ready to shatter you and me, this world can never be an abiding dwelling for you and me. But come what may, assure yourself that God is in our hands while this cup of wine stands between you and me.

XXXVI

With cup in hand I lingered long among the flowers, and yet not one of all my wishes has been realized in this world. But although wine has not led me to the goal of my desires, I will not go from that way, for when man follows a road he turns not back again.

[1] "Kalendars" — Súfi dervishes.

XXXVII

Place the wine-cup in my hand, for my heart is all afire and life slips from us swift as quicksilver. Arise, my beloved, for the favour of fortune is but a cheating dream, arise, for the flame of youth gushes like the water of the torrent.

XXXVIII

We are the servants of love; the devout are otherwise. We are poor ants, and Solomon is otherwise. Ask of us a visage wan with love, and tattered garments for the way of the world is otherwise.

XXXIX

Ascribe not to the wheel of heaven the woe and weal which are the portion of man, the thousand joys and thousand sorrows which Fate awards us, for this wheel, my friend, revolves more helpless than thyself along the highway of the heavenly love.

XL

I have flown like a sparrow-hawk forth from this world of mysteries, in the hope of reaching a higher sphere. But, fallen again to the earth, and finding none worthy of sharing the hidden thoughts of my heart, I have gone forth again by the door through which I came.

XLI

We are lost in love to-day, in the holy shrine we pay homage to wine to-day, sundered from our very being we shall touch the threshold of the eternal throne to-day.

XLII

The day when I hold in my hand a cup of wine, and when in the joy of my heart I drink myself drunk, then in that happy state a hundred miracles become clear to me, and words as limpid as water explain the mystery of things.

XLIII

Since every day is but two halting places, hasten to drink thy fill of wine; for be sure of this, thou wilt never regain thy lost hours, and since thou knowest that this world drives swiftly to its total ruin, imitate it thyself, and day and night seek the sweet annihilation of wine.

XLIV

Behold the dawn arise, O fountain of delights. Drink your wine and touch your lute, for the life of those who sleep will be but brief; and of those who have gone hence, not one will e'er return.

XLV

Yea, it is I, who, in this ruined tavern, surrounded by drinkers and dancers, have staked, for their sakes, all my belongings, soul and heart, and worldly gear, down to my very drinking cup. Thus I set myself free from hope of Heaven and from fear of Hell. Thus I am above the elements, earth, air, fire, and water.

XLVI

Only a breath divides faith and unfaith, only a breath divides belief from doubt. Let us then make merry while we still draw breath, for only a breath divides life from death.

XLVII

The light of the moon has severed the black robe of the night. Drink wine, therefore, for thou wilt never find a moment so precious. Yes, give thyself up to joy, for this same moon will illumine long after us the face of the earth.

XLVIII

The clouds are spread forth again over the faces of the roses, and cover them as with a veil. The desire of drink is still unquenched within my heart. Seek not yet thy couch, for the time has not come. Oh, beloved of my soul, drink wine, drink, for the sun has not yet vanished beneath the horizon.

XLIX

O Thou who knowest man's most hidden thoughts, Thou who upholdest the halt with Thy hands, give me strength to renounce, and heed my pleading, O Thou who art the strength of all men, heed my pleading.

L

I saw upon the walls of Thous a bird perched in front of the skull of Kai Khosrou. The bird said unto the skull, "Alas, what has become of the clash of the gear of thy glory and the bruit of thy trumpets?"

LI

My run of life slips by in a few days. It has passed me by like the wind of the desert. Therefore, so long as one breath of life is left to me, there are two days with which I shall never vex my spirit, the day that has not yet come, and the day that has gone by.

LII

This captain ruby comes from an unknown mine. This perfect gem is stamped with an unknown seal. All our conclusions on the question are vain, for the riddle of perfect love is written in an unknown tongue.

LIII

Since the day brings with it a consciousness of youth, I mean to wile it away with wine even to my heart's delight. Do not blaspheme, on account of its bitterness, this glorious juice, for it is a delight to drink, and bitter only because it is my life.

LIV

O, my sad soul, since it is your destiny to be pierced to the quick by sorrow, since nature bids that you shall be troubled every day with a new torment, therefore, O my soul, tell me why you took up your abode in my body, seeing that you must one day quit it.

LV

On that day of days which men call restful, set aside the cup and drink your wine from a larger measure. If you pledge other days with but a single draught, this day drink twice, for it is indeed the day of days.

LVI

Him, on whom you lean with so much confidence, him, if your eyes were unsealed, you would know for your worst enemy. It is wise in these evil days to seek but little after friendship. The speech of our fellows rings fair only from afar.

LVII

Oh, my heart, since this world grieves thee, since thy pure soul must so soon be severed from thy body, sit thee down in the grassy fields and make merry awhile, before other grasses spring from the very dust.

LVIII

Although this wine in its essence is capable of taking a thousand shapes, assuming now the form of an animal, now the form of a plant, do not therefore believe that it can ever cease to be, and that its essence can be destroyed, for there is the reality when the shadows disappear.

LIX

I see no smoke arise from the fire of my sins; I expect a fairer fate from no man. If the injustice of men makes me lift my hand to my head, I find no solace in laying it on the hem of their gaberdines.

LX

Let us begin again the round of our pleasures; let us continue to disdain the round of prayers. Wherever the wine-flagon is to be found, there also thou mayest see, like unto the neck of the flagon itself, our throats stretched out to the cup.

LXI

Here, below, we are naught but puppets for the diversion of the wheel of the heavens. This is indeed a truth, and no simile. We truly are but pieces on this chessboard of humanity, which in the end we leave, only to enter, one by one, into the grave of nothingness.

LXII

In mosque, in school, in church, in synagogue, men fear for hell and hope for paradise, but the seed of this uncertainty has never sprouted in the soul of him who has penetrated the secrets of the All-Wise.

LXIII

Thou askest me the meaning of this phantasmagoria of things here below. To expound the whole of it to thee would be a work without end. It is a fantastic vision, which springs from a boundless ocean, and sinks again into the same ocean from which it arose.

LXIV

Let us abandon the vain search after the unattainable, and give ourselves up wholly to the joys of the present, to touching the long tresses trembling to the melodious sound of the harp.

LXV

We yield ourselves to the commands of wine, joyously we offer our souls in sacrifice to the smiling stream of the holy juice. Behold our minister of wine, in one hand the flagon, in the other the brimming cup, bidding us quaff the purest wine of his soul.

LXVI

You have wandered upon the face of the earth, but all that you have known is nothing, all that you have seen, all that you have heard, is nothing. Though you travel from world's end to world's end, all that is nothing, although you abide in a corner of your house, all that is nothing.

LXVII

One night I beheld in a dream a sage, who said to me, "In sleep, O my friend, the rose of joy has never blossomed for any man. Why do you do a deed so like to death? Arise, and drink wine, for you will sleep sound enough beneath the earth."

LXVIII

Fling dust to the skies, and drink deep of the wine-flagon; seek ever the fairest women. To what end dost thou sue for pardon, to what end dost thou pray, seeing that of all those departed hence, not one has returned?

LXIX

If the human heart could know the secrets of life, it would know too, knowing death, the secrets of God. If to-day, when you are with yourself, you know nothing, what shall you know to-morrow, when you have passed from yourself?

LXX

Though heaven and earth were blent together, though all the lustre of the stars went out, I would wait in your path, O beloved, and ask of you why you have taken away my life.

LXXI

Thank God, the hour of roses has arrived. From my heart I delight in the thought of breaking the law of Alkoran. For many a day I mean to delight me with girls of lovely face and lovely body, and to turn the meadow to a tulip-bed by the spilth of my wine on the green sward.

LXXII

Although, truly, I have never pierced the pearl of obedience which we owe to Thee, although I have never swept the dust of Thy steps from my heart, I do not despair of reaching to the foot of the throne of Thy mercy, for I have never worried Thee with my importunate prayers.

LXXIII

This jar has been, like me, a creature, loving and unhappy; it has sighed for the long tresses of some fair young girl; that handle by which you hold it now, was once a loving arm to linger fondly round some fair one's neck.

LXXIV

Do not heedlessly beat at every portal. We must learn to take the good with the bad in this life, for we can only play the game according to the number of dots on the face of the dice which destiny throws into the hollow of this heavenly cup.

LXXV

Before ever you or I were born, there were dawns and twilights, and it was not without design that the revolutions of the skies were sanctioned. Be careful, then, how you tread upon this dust, for it was once, no doubt, the apple of some fair girl's eye.

LXXVI

You cannot assure yourself to-day that you shall behold to-morrow's dawn; even to dwell upon to-morrow is mere madness; if your heart is wide awake, do not waste in torpor this little pinch of life, for there is no proof how long it shall abide with you.

LXXVII

Question me not upon the vagaries of this world, nor of the things that yet may be. Look upon this present hour as plunder from destiny. Vex not thyself about the past, nor plague me about the future.

LXXVIII

The temples of the gods and kaabas are places of praise, the chiming of bells is naught but a hymn raised in praise of the All-Potent. The pulpit, the church, the beads, the cross, are all but different symbols of the same homage to the same Lord.

LXXIX

Let not the fear of things to be make sallow thy cheek, let not things present make thee blanch with fear. Enjoy, in this land of shadows, thy share of delight, and do not wait therefor until heaven's gifts are snatched away from you.

LXXX

No false money circulates with us. The broom has cleanly swept our happy home. An old man coming from the tavern said, counselling me, "Drink, friend, drink wine, for many lives will follow yours during your long sleep."

LXXXI

These travellers have departed, and of them all, not one has returned to tell us of the hidden things concealed behind the veil. Oh, devout man, it is by a humble heart, and not by prayer, that the things which concern thy soul will be brought to a favourable issue, for prayer is of no avail to a man without sincerity and contrition.

LXXXII

If you will hearken I will give you good counsel. Do not don the cloak of hypocrisy for the love of God. Eternity is of all time, and this world is but of a moment. Do not, then, barter for a moment the empery of eternity.

LXXXIII

How long shall I vex you with mine ignorance? My nothingness oppresses my heart. Even now I will bind my loins with the girdle of the priests. Wherefore? Because I weary of my way of life.

LXXXIV

Thou hast planted in our hearts an irresistible desire, and at the same time Thou hast forbidden us to satisfy it. In what a strait dost thou find thyself, oh, unhappy man, between this law of thy nature, and this commandment? It is as if thou wert ordered to turn down the cup, without spilling the contents thereof.

LXXXV

O Khayyám, when you are drunk be merry; when you are with your mistress, be glad; since the end of this world is nothingness, think that you are not, and while you are, be jocund.

LXXXVI

All things that be were long since marked upon the tablet of creation. Heaven's pencil has naught to do with good or evil. God set on fate its necessary seal; and all our efforts are but a vain striving.

LXXXVII

I would rather in the tavern with thee pour out all the thoughts of my heart, than without thee go and make my prayer unto Heaven. This, truly, O Creator of all things present and to come, is my religion; whether Thou castest me into the flames, or makest me glad with the light of Thy countenance.

LXXXVIII

I cannot lightly disclose my secret to the bad and the good alike. I cannot amplify my simple thought. I behold a place that I cannot describe; I hold a secret that I cannot reveal.

LXXXIX

In the face of the decrees of Providence, nothing succeeds save resignation. Among men nothing succeeds save counterfeit and hypocrisy. I have employed all the most skilful ruses that the human mind can scheme, but Fate has always overturned my projects.

XC

If a stranger serves you faithfully, think of him as close of kin. If one of your kin betray you, think of him as acting in error. If a poison cures you, call it an antidote; if an antidote works you ill, call it a poison.

XCI

Behold, the time is come, when the earth is about to clothe itself in verdure, when the blossoms breaking forth over the branches, make them become as the hand of Moses, when, as if quickened by the breath of Jesus, the plants spring from the earth, when at last the clouds open their eyes to weep.

XCII

Long have I sung the praise of wine and dwelt among the things of its service. May you be happy, my philosopher, in the belief that you have taken wisdom for your master, but learn, too, that that master is only my pupil.

XCIII

Give not thyself over to care and to grief in the hope of gaining yellow or white money in the end. Enjoy thyself with thy companions, before thy warm breath becomes cold, for thy enemies will feast in thy room when thou art departed.

XCIV

Since it is certain that we must needs go hence, what is the use of being? Why should we strive so eagerly after unattainable happiness? Since for some unknown reason we may not abide here, were it not well to think a little upon our voyage to come? Why should we be so heedless thereof?

XCV

What heart does not bleed for your absence, what soul is not the servant of your enchanting charms? For though you pay heed to no one, there is no one who does not pay heed to you.

XCVI

The world upbraids me as a debauchee, and yet I am not guilty. Ye holy men, look upon yourselves, and learn what ye truly are. You charge me with violation of the Holy Law, but I have committed no other sins than riot, drunkenness, and adultery.

XCVII

My happiness is incomplete while I am sober. When I am drunk, blank ignorance overgrows my reason. There is a state between clear reason and intoxication. Ah, with what joy do I make myself the slave of that state, for therein lies life.

XCVIII

This world is but a hair's breadth in our wretched life. The soul but the faint trace of our blended tears and blood. Hell is but a shadow of the vain toils we take upon ourselves. Paradise is but the moment's rest we sometimes taste here.

XCIX

If you give yourself up to your passion, to your insatiable desire, I prophesy unto you that you will go hence as poor as a beggar. See rather what you are and whence you come, know what you are and learn whither you go.

C

Who can believe that he who made the cup would dream of destroying it? All those fair faces, all those lovely limbs, all those enchanting bodies, what love has made them, and what hate destroys them?

CI

It is but thy drunkenness which makes thee dread death and fear nothingness; for it is clear that from that nothingness the tree of immortality shall spring. Since my soul has been resuscitated by the breath of Jesus, eternal death has fled afar from me.

CII

Copy the tulip, that flames with the new year; take, like her, the cup in your hand, and drink at all advantage your wine with a light heart, in company with a youthful beauty with tulip cheeks. For yon blue wheel may like a whirlwind at any moment dash you down.

CIII

One drop of wine is worth all the kingdoms of the earth: the tile which covers the jar is worth a thousand lives. The cloth with which we wipe the lips moistened with wine is truly more precious than a thousand pieces.

CIV

O, my friends, when I am sped, appoint a meeting and when ye have met together, be ye glad thereof, and when the cup-bearer holds in her hand a flagon of old wine, then think upon old Khayyám and drink to his memory.

CV

There is no shield to save you from the spear-cast of destiny. Glory, gold, silver, each avails not. The more I ponder on this world and its gear, the more I am assured that to be good is all; the rest avails not.

CVI

I pity the heart that is not prompted to abstinence, for it is the daily prey of passions. Only the heart that is free from care can be truly happy; aught in excess of that state is mere vexation.

CVII

How long wilt thou afflict thy soul with the failure of thy ambitions? Trouble is the lot of those who are careful for the future. Pass thy life in joy, therefore, and give not thyself up to the cares of this world. Know that wine will in no wise increase the bitterness of thy woes.

CVIII

He who has the wisdom to keep his heart contented has lost no hour in sorrow; he has either devoted himself to seeking the grace of God, or he has gained tranquillity of soul over the brimming wine-cup.

CIX

To drink wine and to make merry, such is my scheme of life. To pay no heed to heretic or devotee, such is my creed. I asked the bride of all the human race, "What is thy marriage portion?" and she answered, smiling, "My marriage portion lies in the joy of thy heart."

CX

Rejoice, therefore, for the time cometh quickly when all whom thou beholdest now shall be hidden in the earth. Drink, drink wine, and let not the cares of this world overwhelm you. Those who come after thee will too soon become a prey.

CXI

No day ever finds my soul free from amazement, no night ever finds my bosom free from the tears that trickle from my eyes. The unease that sways me forbids the cup of my head from brimming with wine. Alas, how shall an inverted cup be ever filled?

CXII

When God built up my body out of clay, He knew beforehand the fruit of all my deeds. It is not in defiance of His will that I a sinner have sinned. Why then for me does nether hell await?

CXIII

What time my being seemed to lean to prayer and fasting, I deemed for a moment that I was about to touch the goal of my desires; but, alas, a breath has sufficed to destroy the efficacy of my ablutions, and a half measure of wine has set my fasts aside.

CXIV

All my being is attracted by the sight of the fair faces dyed with the hue of the rose; my heart delights to savour the cup of wine. Yea, I wish to enjoy the award of each of my members before those members fall again into the all from which they sprang.

CXV

Yesterday I visited the workshop of a potter: there I beheld two thousand pots, some speaking, and some holding their peace. Each one seemed to say to me, "Where is then the potter, where the buyer of pots, where the seller?"

CXVI

I am worthy neither of heaven nor yet of hell. God knows from what clay He fashioned me. I am as heretical as a dervish, as ill-favoured as a harlot. I have neither faith nor wealth, nor hope of paradise.

CXVII

Yesterday, passing drunken before the tavern door, I beheld an old man, full of wine, bearing a gourd upon his back. I spake to him and said, "Oh, old man, dost thou not fear God?" He answered me, "There is mercy with Him — go, therefore, and drink."

CXVIII

Wine, which is valued by the man of understanding, is for me the water of life. It is balm to my heart, and an elixir which renews the strength of my soul. Hath not God himself said: "The benefit of mankind is found in wine."

CXIX

Poor man, thy passion, like unto a watch-dog, gives forth hollow sounds. It masks the wiles of the fox, it seeks the sleep of the hare; it blends in one the rage of the tiger with the hunger of the wolf.

CXX

Who led thee here this night to me, thus drenched with wine? Who, lifting the light veil that covered thee, has guided thee to my threshold? Who has swept thee away again more swiftly than the wind, to feed more fiercely the flame that burnt already brightly in thine absence?

CXXI

Every heart in which Heaven hath set the lamp of love, whether that heart incline to mosque or synagogue, if its name be written in the book of love, it is freed from the fear of hell and the hope of paradise.

CXXII

O you who out of all the world art dearest to my heart, more precious than the soul which quickens me or than the eyes that light my path, there is nothing, oh my beloved, dearer than life, and yet you, ah, you are a hundred times more dear.

CXXIII

How fair are the green fringes of the living stream. Surely they sprang once from the lip of some celestial fair. Trample them not with scorn, for they spring from the dust of a tulip-tinted face.

CXXIV

We are enduring naught but cark and care in this world which offers us a fleeting harbourage. Alas, not one of all creation's riddles has been read to us, and we depart hence with sorry hearts.

CXXV

When the day arriveth, when, with my head thrown back, I fall at the feet of death, when the destroying angel shall have made me like unto a bird without feathers; oh, then, see thou that of my dust a wine-flagon is formed — for who can say but that the odour of the wine may re-inform my clay?

CXXVI

Master, make lawful but one alone of all our wishes. Hold your peace and guide us on the road to God. Truly we walk straightly, it is you who go astray. Heal your eyes and leave us to our peace.

CXXVII

Since this vain world abideth not, I will occupy myself only with guile, I will give up my thoughts to pleasure and limpid wine. They say unto me, "Hath not God forbidden it?" — He can truly never have given me this commandment, for if He had I could not obey it!

CXXVIII

When I draw near unto the gear of this world, I behold all mankind seizing on the good things it contains without any merit of theirs, while to me, oh All-Powerful God, nothing is vouchsafed but the shipwreck of my hopes.

CXXIX

A mouthful of wine is worth more than the kingdom of Kai Khosrou; it is more desirable than the throne of Kai Kobad or the empery of Thous. The sighs with which a lover disturbs the dawn are preferable to the howlings of sanctimonious hypocrites.

CXXX

If I do drink wine it is not for mine own selfish gratification, it is not for riot's sake or to hold aloof from religion and the virtues, no, it is but that I may escape for a moment from myself. No other purpose spurs me to drink and be drunken.

CXXXI

Folk say that there is a hell. This is a vain error, in which no trust should be placed, for if there were a hell for lovers and for bibbers of wine, why heaven would be, from to-morrow morn, as empty as the hollow of my hand.[1]

[1] See quatrains printed in Second Edition only, lxv.

CXXXII

If you have drunk wine faithfully all the week, do not hold your hand on the Sabbath; for, by our holy faith, there is no difference between that day and another. Be thou the worshipper of the All-High and not a worshipper of the days of the week.

CXXXIII

Dear my God, You are merciful, and mercy is pity. Why then has the greatest sinner been shut off from paradise? If You only pardon me because I have obeyed You, what mercy is that? It would be merciful to forgive me, sinner that I am.

CXXXIV

Put wisdom by, and take the cup in hand. Cease to perplex yourself about heaven and hell. Sell thy silken turban to buy wine with the price and have no fear. Pluck off that costly head-gear — content thy head with a woollen cap.

CXXXV

They bid me drink no wine during this month, for this month is the Prophet's, nor yet in that month, for that is the month of God. Very well, leave those two months to God and His Prophet, and let us drink deep in the month of Ramazan, since that month is reserved to us.

CXXXVI

Although wine is forbidden, cease not to drink thereof. Drink, by morning and eventide, drink to the sound of song, and to the melody of the harp. When thou hast procured wine glowing like the ruby, pour one drop on the earth, and drink the rest.

CXXXVII

Name my merits one by one, take my defects by tens at a time. Pardon every sin for the love of God. Do not feed the fire of hate with the breath of passion, pardon us in the memory of the tomb of the Prophet of God.

CXXXVIII

The multitude of creeds has divided mankind into seventy-two nations. Of all these doctrines I have chosen that of thy love. Of what meaning are the words: impiety, Islam, faith, sin? Thou art my sole desire. Away from me all these vain pretences.

CXXXIX

Truly the wine in the cup is a shining life, in the body of the flagon it is a clear soul. No churlish fellow is worthy of my fellowship. Only the wine cup deserves to enter therein, for it is at the same time a solid and a diaphanous body.

CXL

This aged caravanserai which men call the world, this alternating home of light and night, is but the fag end of a feast of a hundred such lords as Jamshid. It is but a tomb serving as a pillow for the sleep of a hundred such kings as Bahram.

CXLI

If the rose is not our portion do not the thorns remain? If the light does not reach us, does not the fire remain? If we have not the garment, the temple nor the priest, do not the mosque, the dome, the minaret, remain?

CXLII

Where are the dancers? Where is the wine? Hasten that I may do honour to the gourd. Happy is the heart which remembers the wine in the morning. Oh! there exist three things in this world which are dear to me — a head overtaken with wine, a fair mistress, and the sound of singing.

CXLIII

O Wheel of Heaven, heedless of bread and salt, you leave me ever naked as a fish. The wheel of the weaver weaveth clothes for men, therefore it is more charitable than thou, O Wheel of Heaven.

CXLIV

O Khayyám, sad is his lot who lets his heart be vexed by earthly tribulations. Drink then to the touch of the lute, drink wine in a crystal cup, drink before the crystal is dashed against a stone.

CXLV

Tell me, friend, what have I acquired of the riches of this world?—Nothing. What has fleeting time left in my hands?—Nothing. I am the torch of joy, but once the torch is extinct I exist no longer. I am the cup of Jamshid, but the cup once broken I exist no more.

CXLVI

Behold the dawn appears. She has torn aside the veil of night. Rise, then, and empty the morning's cup. Why so sad? Drink, heart, drink, for these dawns will follow and follow with their faces turned to us, when our faces shall be turned to the earth.

CXLVII

If the wheel of heaven denies me bread, am I not prompt for war? If I have not a noble reputation, have I not my shame? Lo, the cup brimmed with a crimson wine. He that will not drink deserves to be stoned.

CXLVIII

Since life flies, what matters it whether it be sweet or bitter? Since our soul must escape through our lips, what matters it whether it be at Naishápúr or Babylon? Drink, then, for after thou and I are dust, the moon will for many days pass from her last to her first quarter, and from her first to her last.

CXLIX

Why, when to-day the rose of fortune blossoms, is the wine-cup missing from your hands? Drink, my friend, drink red wine, for Time is a merciless fellow, and it is hard to find again a day like this.

CL

The month of Ramazan has come, the time of the wine is over. Yes, the days of that delicious drink and of our easy life have fallen far from us. Woe's me for the wine that waits undrunken in the jar, and the eyes of the fair women that burn for us in vain.

CLI

The palace, where Bahram loved to troll the bowl, is now the resting-place of stags, the lair of lions. See how this Bahram who loved to snare the wild ass with a running noose is snared himself in his turn by the tomb.

CLII

We have come too late into this whirl and welter of life, and we have fallen here, below the level of mankind. Ah! since life does not, alas, move according to our wishes, it were better it should cease; for already we have reached satiety.

CLIII

Although sin has left me evil of favour, unhappy, I am not without hope, in which I am like unto the idolaters who pin their faith to the gods of their temples. None the less on the morn when I must die of the last night's riot I will clamour for wine and call for my paramour, for what care I for heaven or hell?

CLIV

Oh, my dear companions, pour me wine to make my countenance clear with the colour of rubies. When I am dead, wash me in wine, and make my litter and my coffin of the wood of the vine.

CLV

A draught of wine is better than the empery of Jamshid. The perfume of the cup is better than the gifts of Hatim Tai. The sigh which slips at dawning from the breast of him who went drunk to bed, is better than the lamentations of Majnun.

CLVI

The clouds spread over the face of the heavens, and rain patters on the sward. How could it be possible to live for a single second without crimson wine? This green before me delights my eye, but the grass which shall spring from my dust whose eye will delight in?

CLVII

Oh! thoughtless man, be not deceived by this world, since thou knowest its pursuits! Throw not thy precious life to the wind. Hasten to seek thy friend, and delay not to drink wine.

CLVIII

For the love of thee which possesses my heart I am ready to accept all manner of reproof, and if I break my vow, I will bear the blame thereof. Oh, if until the last day I should endure the pain thou causest me, the time would seem but too short.

CLIX

O heart, my heart, since the very basis of all this world's gear is but a fable, why do you adventure in such an infinite abyss of sorrows? Trust thyself to fate, uphold the evil, for what the pencil has traced will not be effaced for you.

CLX

Of all who have set out upon the long journey, who has come back, that I may ask him tidings? My friends, take heed to let naught go by in the hope of hopes for, be sure, you will not come back again.

CLXI

Since every waning night, every waning day, cuts off a cantle of your life, do not allow these nights and days to heap you thick with dust. Daff them gaily by, for, alas, what a world of time you will be gone hence while nights and days still wax and wane.

CLXII

That heavenly wheel, which tells its tale to no man, has mercilessly slain a thousand monarchs and a thousand favourites; drink your wine, then, for it gives back life to none. Alas, no one of those that quit this world will e'er come back to it.

CLXIII

O thou, who lordest over the lords of the earth, dost thou know the days when wine delighteth the heart? They are in good sooth the Monday, the Tuesday, the Wednesday, the Thursday, the Friday, the Saturday, and the Sunday to boot.

CLXIV

Heedless man, thy fleshly body is naught, yon vault built up of seven shining heavens is naught. Give thyself up to all delight in this kingdom of misrule, for our life is only bound to it for a moment and that moment itself is nothing.

CLXV

This caravan of life passeth in a strange manner — beware, oh, friend, for it is the time of thy pleasure which fleeth from thee thus. Trouble not thyself, therefore, for the grief which awaiteth our friends on the morrow, for behold how the night passeth away!

CLXVI

Once, seeing an old man stagger from the wine-shop, with his prayer mat on his shoulders, and a flagon in his hand, I said to him, "What means this, oh, my master?" and he made answer to me, "Drink wine, my brother, for this world is but a breath of wind."

CLXVII

A love-lorn nightingale, straying into a garden, and beholding the roses smiling, and the cup filled with wine, flew to my ear and sang, "Be advised, friend, there is no recalling the vanished life."

CLXVIII

He who has laid the foundations of the earth, of the wheel of the heavens, what wounds has He not hollowed out in the unhappy heart of man! What ruby-coloured lips has He not buried in this little globe of earth? What musk-scented tresses has He not hidden in the bosom of the dust?

CLXIX

Khayyám, your body is like unto a tent, the soul thereof is the sultan, and his last home is nothingness. When the sultan quits his pavilion, the fatal ferrash strikes it, to set it up at another stage.

CLXX

Each drop of wine which the cup-bearer pours into the cup will quench the fire of grief in thy burning eyes. Is it not said, O great God, that wine is an elixir which drives away all the sorrows that weigh down the heart?

CLXXI

When the violet has dyed her veil, when the zephyr has made the roses expand their leaves, then he who is wise will drink wine with a companion whose body is white as silver, and turn down the cup upon the earth.

CLXXII

The devout man can never value the divine mercy as we do. A stranger can never understand thee like thine own familiar friend. Thou sayest, "If thou sinnest, I will send thee to hell." Go, tell that to one who knoweth Thee not.

CLXXIII

O! my heart, act as if all the wealth of this world were thine — think that this house is furnished with all things, that it is adorned sumptuously; and pass thy life joyfully in this distracted sphere. Say to thyself that thou restest here for but a few days, and wilt then arise and depart.

CLXXIV

The days of our abiding on this earth are worthless without wine and the cup-bearer, worthless without the soft melodies of Iram's lute. I have studied closely the course of earthly things, and I know that joy and pleasure alone are dear, all else is worthless.

CLXXV

Drawn along by the flying feet of time, which only bestows its gifts on the least worthy, my life is overwhelmed with pain and travail. In the garden of mankind my heart is closed up like the bud of a rose, and like a tulip it is drenched with blood.

CLXXVI

Khayyám, who sewed the tents of learning, has fallen suddenly into the crater of despair, and here lies calcined. The knife of Fate has cut his being's thread, and the impatient world has sold him for a song.[1]

CLXXVII

In spring time I love to sit in the meadow with a paramour perfect as a houri and a goodly jar of wine, and though I may be blamed for this, yet hold me lower than a dog if ever I dream of paradise.

CLXXVIII

Sweet is it to drink red wine in a fair cup. Sweet it is to hear the wedded melodies of lutes and harps. The fanatic who recks not of the joys of a cup of wine is pleasing only when he is a thousand miles away from us.

CLXXIX

Get thyself dancing girls, wine, and a mistress as fair as the houris, if indeed there be houris, or seek out a limpid stream gushing by a meadow, if any meadow be, and ask for no better lot. Vex yourself no more with an extinguished hell, for truly there is no other paradise than this, if any paradise there be.

[1] See FitzGerald Preface.

CLXXX

Be on your guard, my friend, for you will be sundered from your soul, you will pass behind the curtain of the secrets of heaven. Drink wine, for you know not whence you come. Be merry, for you know not where you go.

CLXXXI

Although the call of duty has led my feet to the mosque, it is not truly to lift up my voice in prayer. I stole one day from there a carpet, and since this is worn out, I have come here again and again.

CLXXXII

Let us no longer allow the cares of this world to oppress our souls. Let us give ourselves up entirely to drinking wine. Pure limpid and rose-coloured. Wine, oh, my friend, is the blood of the world, and the world is our murderer; how can we then refrain from drinking the blood of him who has spilt ours?

CLXXXIII

There came a voice at dawning from the wine-shop, crying, "Arise, ye haunters of the tavern-divan, arise, and fill the cannikin before Fate comes to fill the cup of your being."

CLXXXIV

O, my soul! drink this divine nectar which hath not been stirred: drink to the memory of the enchanting idols who enslave the heart of man. Wine is the blood of the grape, my beloved, and the vine says to thee, "Drink of it, since I have placed it under thy control."

CLXXXV

In the season of flowers, drink wine the colour of roses, drink to the plaintive notes of the flute, and the melodious sound of the harp. I for my part drink thereof and rejoice, and it is congenial to me. If thou wilt not drink, what is that to me? Go, then, and eat stones.

CLXXXVI

When the memory of my offences cometh to my mind, the fire, which in former days burnt in my heart now covers my face with shame. However, it is well known that a generous master will pardon the slave who repenteth.

CLXXXVII

Oh, my soul, thou and I together are like unto a compass. We form but one body, having two points. Truly, we move but from the one point, and make the round of the circle ; but the day cometh, and is not far off, when the two points must reunite.[1]

CLXXXVIII

At the first, life was given unto me without my consent, therefore my own existence filled me with astonishment. Finally, with regret we lapse out of this world, understanding neither the purpose of our coming, our stay, nor our departure.

CLXXXIX

I am a rebellious slave : where is Thy will? My heart is defiled with sins : where is Thy light ? Where is Thy control ? If Thou wilt only bestow paradise on those who obey Thy laws it is a debt which Thou payest, and where then is Thy mercy?

CXC

Believe not that I fear the world, or that the thought of death and the departure of my soul fills me with terror. Since death is a truth, what have I to fear from it ? All that I fear is, that my life has not been well spent.

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[1] See FitzGerald's Notes, lvi.

CXCI

I would sell the diadem of the khan, the crown of the king, to purchase the song of the flute girl. Let us sell the turban, yea, and the garment of silk, for a cup of wine; let us sell the chaplet which alone contains a multitude of hypocrisy.

CXCII

When the tree of my existence is uprooted, when my members are scattered, let them make pitchers of my dust, and let them fill the pitchers with wine; thus shall the dust be quickened again.

CXCIII

Oh Thou before whose eyes sin is of no moment, say to him who has the wisdom to announce this great truth, that to the mind of the philosopher it is the crown of folly to make the divine prescience the support of sin.

CXCIV

O my friend, come hither, let us forget to-day and to-morrow, and steal this one short hour of life. When to-morrow we shall have abandoned this old dwelling-place, we shall become the contemporaries of all those who departed hence for the last seven thousand years.

CXCV

This world has gained nothing by my sojourn here below, and its glory and greatness will not be lessened by my departure. I have never heard with my ears, and have never been told by anyone the reason of my coming or going.

CXCVI

All hidden things are known to the Eternal Wisdom, who numbereth every hair of our head, and hath fashioned all our members. By hypocrisy thou canst deceive mankind, but how wilt thou deceive the All-Knowing?

CXCVII

Wine giveth wings to the heavy-hearted. Wine is a mole on the cheek of wisdom. We have not drunk of it during the Ramazan which has fled, but behold now the night of the month of the drinking of wine has arrived.

CXCVIII

See that thou art never left without wine, for it is wine which fills the heart of man with wisdom and with knowledge of religion. If the Devil had tasted one drop thereof, he would have adored Adam, and would have bowed himself down before him two thousand times.

CXCIX

Arise, and strike the earth with thy feet, while we accompany thee with our hands. Let us drink in the presence of beautiful women with languorous Narcissus eyes. Gladness beginneth not but with the twentieth cup, and it is wonderfully rounded when one has come to the sixtieth.

CC

Never despair, for all thy sins, of the divine mercy of the Merciful Master, for if you were to die to-day, dead drunk, to-morrow He would pardon your corrupted bones.

CCI

Take the cup in your hand, and lift up your voice in the choir of the nightingales, for if it were seemly to drink the blood of the vine with no sweet concord of harmonious sound, the wine itself would make no sound in gurgling from the flagon.

CCII

I have closed my heart against covetousness and I am thus released from my debt both to those who are men, and those who deserve not that name, but since there existeth only one friend who will hold me by the hand, I am what I am; to him alone do I render account.

CCIII

O Wheel of Heaven, thy revolving course displeases me. Set me free, therefore, for I am unworthy of thy yoke. If thy purpose always holds to grant thy favours only to the fools in their folly, I am not over-wise nor over-learned.

CCIV

God hath promised us wine in Paradise. Therefore how can it be denied to us in this world? An Arab, a prey to drunkenness, one day severed with his sword the legs of a certain camel. It is for this cause that the prophet has declared wine forbidden.

CCV

Since, of all thy past delights, there remaineth to thee only the memory, since the only faithful friend remaining to thee is the wine-cup, since in truth it is thy only possession, rejoice therefore in it, and let not the cup escape from thy hands.

CCVI

In this mad world of medley, make haste to pick some flowers. Sit in the high places of laughter, and press the cup to your lips. Heaven is heedless alike of sin or service, so make merry after your heart's desire.

CCVII

My love has touched the topmost of its flame. The beauty of her who holds my heart in thrall is beyond praise. My heart speaks, but my tongue, made mute, refuses utterance to my thoughts. High heaven, was aught ever seen so strange! I am racked with thirst, and yet a fresh cool stream flows before me.

CCVIII

May the tavern always be thronged with revellers, may fire consume the skirts of the saintly, may their robes fall in rags, may their blue gowns be trampled under the toper's feet.

CCIX

I am more industrious than thee, thou sage of the town. Though I be drunk, I am better than thee, for thou drinkest human blood, and I the blood of the vine. Be just and pronounce which of us two is the most sanguinary.

CCX

Alas! How long the time will be when we are no longer in this world, and the world will still exist. There will remain of us neither fame nor trace. The world was not imperfect before we came into it — it will be in no wise changed when we are departed hence.

CCXI

How long will you remain the dupe of this world's delicate dyes and odours? When will you cease from vexing about the good and the bad? Were you the fountain of youth, were you the very water of life itself, that should not save you from sinking into the bosom of the earth.

CCXII

Our being must be effaced from the book of life, we must expire in the arms of death. Oh, enchanting cup-bearer, bring me the liquor joyfully, since I must become earth.

CCXIII

On the day when the juice of the grape does not turn my brain, this world has nothing to give but that which is poison to me. Yes, the misery of this wretched world is a poison — wine is its only antidote. To escape then from the terror of the poison, I will take the antidote.

CCXIV

Behold the little handful of fools, who hold the world in their hands, and who in their simple folly think themselves the wisest of the wise. Vex not yourself, for in their snug content they call all men heretics who are not of a kindred folly.

CCXV

Abandon thyself to enjoyment, for sorrow is without end. The stars will assemble in the heavens in their former courses, and of the bricks which they make from thy body will they build palaces for others.

CCXVI

How long will the unrighteous deeds of others cover our face with shame? How long shall we be consumed in the furnace of this vain world? Arise — and like a man cast aside this world's sadness. To-day at least is a day of rejoicing — come, let us drink rose-coloured wine.

CCXVII

I wage a warfare without end against my passions, but what can I do? The remembrance of my iniquities is like a sore burden, but what can I do? I believe truly, that in Thy mercy thou wilt blot out my sins. But the knowledge that my dishonour is not hid from Thee remaineth — what can I do?

CCXVIII

Those who have trod the world beneath their feet, who have wandered over the world in the pursuit of gain, have never learned the living truth of life.

CCXIX

The day when the celestial steed of golden stars was saddled, when the proud planets and the constellations were created — from that same day the divan of Fate decreed our lot. How then can we be held accountable, since ours is the position that has been made for us?

CCXX

My soul is often made sorrowful by the movement of the wheel of the skies. I struggle against my vile nature. Oh! that I had wisdom enough to hide myself forever from this world, or understanding to live therein, without allowing it to possess my heart!

CCXXI

Woe's me for the best that slips between our fingers; woe's me for all the hearts that death has drowned in blood; woe's me that none return from the hither world with tales of those who have departed thence.

CCXXII

That which renews our youth is wine: it is the living juice of the vine, and the company of the fair. And since it was by water that this world of nothingness was brought to destruction, all that is left for us is to destroy ourselves with wine, and to pass our life in delicate drunkenness.

CCXXIII

Alas, the season of my youth decays, the kindly spring of our delights goes by, and that delightful bird, whose name is Youth, has flown. It came, I know not whence, and goes, I know not whither.

CCXXIV

When I am dead, smooth my tomb down to the level of the earth without delay, and make me in this wise an example to mankind. Then knead the ashes of my body with wine, and make thereof the cover of a jar.

CCXXV

Bring hither the captain ruby in a cup of crystal, bring hither the desired and the beloved of all generous men. Since thou knowest that all the dwellers on the earth are but dust, and that when the wind passeth over them they are no more, bring hither the wine.

CCXXVI

Oh Thou, whom all creation seeketh in madness and despair, the dervish and the rich man alike find no way to reach unto Thee. Thy name is in the mouth of all men, but all are deaf. Thou art present to all eyes, but all are blind.

CCXXVII

How long will you utter these vain complainings against the order of the earth? Arise, and make every moment instinct with joy. While the world offers so many smiling meadows, drink your crimson wine from a brimming cup.

CCXXVIII

When you find yourself in the fellowship of some cypress-slender girl, more tender-tinted than the early rose, do not hold aloof from the flowers of the meadow, do not let the cup fall from your hand before the angel of death, like unto the wild wind that scatters abroad the rose-leaves, tears asunder the veil of thy existence.

CCXXIX

That high and ominous wheel whose trade it is to play the tyrant has never solved for anyone the knot of any perplexity. Where'er it sees a bleeding heart it speeds to grind upon the open wound.

CCXXX

This vault of heaven under which we move in a vain shadow, may be likened unto a lantern; the sun is the focus, and we, like the figures, live there in amazement.

CCXXXI

This mocking world holds naught but shadows and phantasms. He is indeed unlucky who loses his way in the crowd thereof. Rest, friend, drink thy wine, open thy heart to mirth, and free yourself thus from all these shadows and phantasms.

CCXXXII

Do not suffer vain thoughts to enter the gate of your mind. Drink while the years drive by, let the cup be always full to the lips. Pay your court to the daughter of the vine, and be glad, for it is better to enjoy the forbidden daughter than the permitted mother.

CCXXXIII

Not once has the wheel of the heavens been favourable to me. Never for one moment have I listened to a sweet voice, never for one day have I tasted a fleeting happiness, but therefor I have been overwhelmed in an abyss of woe.

CCXXXIV

Oh! what a misfortune that it is the ignorant or inexperienced who possess the bread well baked — the incomplete, who possess complete riches! The eyes of the beautiful girls are the joy of the heart, and it is mere knaves and slaves who are their owners.

CCXXXV

O Khayyám, although indeed the Wheel of Heaven, in setting its tent, has closed the door to discussions, nevertheless the Eternal Cup-Bearer has formed in the cup of creation a thousand other Khayyáms, like unto thee.

CCXXXVI

The day when I shall no longer be known to myself, and when they speak of me as a tale that is told: then my heart's desire is that from my ashes may be formed a wine jar for the tavern.

CCXXXVII

Thou hast fashioned me of water and clay; how then can I alter it? Whether I be made of wool or of silk, it is Thou who hast woven; how then can I alter it? Thou hast predestined my good and evil deeds — how can I alter it?

CCXXXVIII

Those mighty and pompous lords, so orgulous in their estates, are so devoured by care and sorrow that life is become a bitter burthen. Yet, marvellous to note, they will not hail with the name of man those who are not, as they are, the slave of their passions.

CCXXXIX

Behold we have fled, and the season sighs for our going; for out of a hundred pearls, but one is thridded. Alas, it is owing to the ignorance of mankind that a hundred thousand noble thoughts remain unuttered.

CCXL

With a beloved friend for my companion, that which delights me is a cup of wine. When my heart is brimmed with grief, my eyes flow a fountain of tears. Alas, since this wretched world is for us of short duration, all that is left for us is to pass our life in drunkenness.

CCXLI

An earthly love can seldom inspire perfection. It is like a half extinct fire which no longer gives forth heat. He who loveth in truth, should not know rest, or food, or sleep, through months, or through years, by day, or by night.

CCXLII

One cup of wine is worth a hundred hearts, a hundred faiths; one drop of wine is of more value than the empire of kings! What is there in truth to be named before it? Its bitterness is beyond all the sweets of life.

CCXLIII

How many men do I behold plunged in the sleep of ignorance upon the earth, how many already buried in its bosom! When I cast my eyes over this desert of nothingness, how many souls do I see who have not yet arrived — how many who have already departed!

CCXLIV

Seeing that Thy mercy is vouchsafed to me, I have no fear for my iniquities; since Thou possessest all goodness, I need not be anxious to provide myself for the journey. The leaves of the Book have no terrors for me, since Thy clemency has cleared my countenance,

CCXLV

Yesterday I beheld at the bazaar a potter smiting with all his force the clay he was kneading. The earth seemed to cry out to him, "I also was such as thou — treat me therefore less harshly."

CCXLVI

Since thou ownest only that which hath been vouchsafed to thee, let not thy heart be given over to covetousness. Fix not thy affections on the things of this world, for at the end of the play thou wilt have to leave all, and convey thyself away.

CCXLVII

To-day, the weather is pleasant, it is neither hot nor cold. The dew washes the dust from the face of the roses, and the nightingale crieth to the yellow flowers, saying, "Ye must drink wine."

CCXLVIII

May I always hold in my hand a brimming flagon! May my love never wane for those fair girls, like unto Houris. Folk say, God bids you renounce these joys, but if He gave me such an order, I should not obey it. Perish the thought!

CCXLIX

The wheel of the heavens only increaseth our woes beyond measure. She giveth nothing to us here that she does not as soon snatch away. Oh, if those who have not yet come into the world did but know the miseries which await them, truly they would never come.

CCL

At the moment when my soul shall be delivered from death, when my members shall be scattered from the tree of my life like dry leaves before the wind, O, then, with what joy I shall pass out of this world through a sieve, before my own dust is passed through it by the Builder.

CCLI

Behold the dawn; arise, O beardless lad, and fill with ruddy wine the clear vessel, for you may seek hereafter, and seek in vain, this fair hour which this world of shadows lends you.

CCLII

Those who by their learning are the elect of the world, who by their intellect climb the heights of heaven, those who scale the firmament in their search after the things of Divine Wisdom, lose their wits, seized with dizziness and all amazement.

CCLIII

When you drink, drink with a witty fellowship, drink with fair women with smiling lips and tulip-tinted cheeks. Drink not too deep, do not babble about it. Do not make it a catch word; drink, but drink discreetly, and in secret.

CCLIV

Let not the constant man forswear the juice of the vine, for wine contains all the virtue of the very water of life. If anyone will renounce his wine during the month of Ramazan, let him at least also renounce the recitation of his prayers.

CCLV

Do not forswear the juice of the vine if you have any store thereof. For many a repenting sign will follow such a sacrifice. The roses shed their petals, the nightingales cast their songs abroad upon the air; would it be wise in such an hour to forswear the flagon?

CCLVI

To-morrow I shall have leaped over the mountain which divideth us, and shall seize the cup in my hand with surpassing joy. My beloved is gracious, the hour is fair and favouring. If I hasten not to rejoice in this moment, when shall I know joy and gladness?

CCLVII

They tell us of a paradise, peopled with houris, flowing with wine and honey. Then must it be lawful to love wine and women here, since such is the goal to which our existence tends.

CCLVIII

So long as the friend refuses to pour for me the soul-inspiring wine, so long as the skies refuse to shower a thousand kisses on my face and feet, so long will it be idle, when the holy month is at hand, to bid me give my flagon the go-by. How can I renounce it when God has not so ordered me?

CCLIX

The very hills would leap for joy did you but wash their steeps with wine. Only a fool is scornful of the flagon. You who bid me renounce the juice of the vine, learn that wine is the soul, the complement of man.

CCLX

In the ways of the soul thou must walk with understanding. About the things of this world thou must keep silence. Though thou hast ears, eyes, and tongue, thou must be as if thou hadst them not.

CCLXI

Drink your wine in the fellowship of those slender beings, the crimson of whose cheeks disturbs the heart. Friend, when you are bitten by the serpent of sorrow, drink the antidote. For my part I drink and I boast thereof, may it prove good to me. If you will not drink, what would you that I should do? Go, fool, and eat the earth.

CCLXII

He who, in this world, possesses half a loaf and can shelter himself in any nest, he who is neither the master, nor slave of any man, tell him his lot is sweet and tranquil, and he should live content therein.

CCLXIII

Sometimes the draught of our life is clear, sometimes turbid. Sometimes our robes are wool, sometimes of silk. All that is of no moment to the enlightened soul; but is it of no moment to die?

CCLXIV

The greatest wisdom consists in drawing the delight of our hearts from the wine flagon; letting not our thoughts dwell on the present or the past; and finally in releasing, if but for a moment, from the bonds of reason, this soul which groans in this prison-house wherein it is for a time enclosed.

CCLXV

If you are indeed my friends, silence your vain discourse, and soften my sorrows by filling my cup with wine. When I am turned to dust, mould of my dust a brick, and place that brick in some gap in the walls of a tavern.

CCLXVI

No man has pierced the secrets of the cause. No man has ever passed a step outside himself. I watch, and I observe only imperfection from the pupil to the Master, imperfection in all that is born of woman.

CCLXVII

Folk talk of Paradise where houris dwell, where the Heavenly river flows, where wine and honey and sugar abound! Bah! Fill me quick a cup of wine and put it in my hand, for a present pleasure is worth a thousand future joys.

CCLXVIII

From time to time my heart seems cabined in its cage. It is a disgrace to be thus blended of water and of earth. I dreamed of breaking down this prison-house, but then my foot would slip on the stone of the law of the Koran.

CCLXIX

They tell us that the moon of Ramazan is close at hand, that we must forswear wine. Well and good, then I propose at the end of the feast to drink so deep that I shall be drunken to the very end of the sacred month.

CCLXX

The potters who without cease plunge their hands in the clay, who give all their mind, all their skill, to form it, how long will they continue to trample it under foot, to smite it with their hands? What then are their thoughts? Do they not consider that it is the mould of mankind they treat thus?

CCLXXI

Drink, then, drink of the wine which giveth eternal life. Drink, for it is the fountain of life and of youth. It burneth as a flame, but like unto the water of life it dispelleth sorrow — drink therefore.

CCLXXII

Has Thy empire gained in glory by my service, O Lord my God; has Thy grandeur suffered aught by my sins? Forgiveness, God, and punish not, for I know that You punish late and pardon early.

CCLXXIII

There are those who in the madness of their arrogance are fallen into the depths of pride, others again who abandon themselves to the quest of houris and celestial palaces. When at last the veil is drawn it will be revealed that they all have fallen far, far, far, from Thee.

CCLXXIV

Alas, my heart can find no comfort, my soul is on the point of escaping from my lips, without having attained its desire. Alas! my life has passed without knowledge, and the essence of this love remaineth unknown.

CCLXXV

Seize the sparkling cup in thy hand, as soon as the yellow day-break appeareth. Truth is sharp, it has been said, in the mouth of mankind, for this cause, it may be, that wine is very truth.

CCLXXVI

How long wilt thou expend thy existence on vain self-love, or in searching for the source of being and of not being? Drink wine, then, for since thy life must be followed by death, thou hadst best pass it in sleep or in drunkenness.

CCLXXVII

O, beloved, before care seizeth thee, bid them serve us with wine the colour of roses. Thou art not made of gold, O thoughtless fool, that thou shouldst hope to be dug up after thou art laid in the earth.

CCLXXVIII

It would be hard for my hand, familiar with the flagon, to handle the Koran, and rest upon the pulpit. It is different with you, you dusty devotee; as for me, I am a sodden swiller, and I do not know that flame can fire fluid.

CCLXXIX

Be not desirous of the things of this world. If you would live in happiness, break in sunder the bonds which hold you captive to earthly joys and sorrows. Be content, for the heavens move in their accustomed course, and your life is of short duration.

CCLXXX

Oh, my friend, wherefore vex thyself with the problem of existence. Wherefore trouble thy heart and thy soul thus with idle questioning? Live thy life in joy and gladness, for after all, thy counsel was not asked in the ordering of human affairs.

CCLXXXI

It is said that there will be judgment at the last day, and that the Beloved Friend will be enraged. But from the Eternal Goodness, good alone can proceed. Fear not, therefore, for thou shalt find mercy at the last.

CCLXXXII

Drink wine, before thy name has vanished from the world, for when that nectar floweth into thy heart, care will depart therefrom. Unbind the tresses of the loved one's hair before the sinews of thy own bones are themselves unbound.

CCLXXXIII

Behold the dawn arises. Let us rejoice in the present moment with a cup of crimson wine in our hand. As for honour and fame, let that fragile crystal be dashed to pieces against the earth.

CCLXXXIV

No one has ever drawn aside the veil of Fate. To no one are the hidden things of the Divine Wisdom made known. For seventy-two years I have thought thereon, by day and night, but I have learned nothing, and the enigma remaineth unsolved.

CCLXXXV

See that thou drinkest not thy wine in the company of some clown, riotous, having neither wit nor manners. Nought but dissensions can come of it. In the night-time thou wilt suffer from his drunkenness, his clamour and his folly. On the morrow his prayers and his penitence will cause thy head to ache.

CCLXXXVI

Oh, Wheel of Heaven, you fill my soul with sadness, you rend my garb of joy, you change the air I breathe into water, the water I drink into earth.

CCLXXXVII

Once thou art in the tavern, thou canst only make thy ablutions with wine. When thy name hath once been befouled there, thou canst not again cleanse it. Bring hither the wine therefore, since the covering of our shame hath been torn beyond repair.

CCLXXXVIII

What dweller on this earth has ever folded in his embrace a fair one with rose-tinted cheeks, who has not first received some thorn in the heart from time? Behold this comb, before it can be suffered to touch the scented hair of beauty, it has to be hacked into a ridge of teeth.

CCLXXXIX

Drink wine, for therein thou shalt find forgetfulness for all thy anxieties, and it will deliver thee from thy meditations on the problems of the earth. Renounce not this alchemy, for if thou drinkest but one measure thereof, it will scatter to the winds thy endless cares.

CCXC

Open to me, O God, the gate of Thy gifts. Give me to eat, that I may owe nothing to Thy creatures, give me to drink till drunkenness drowns sorrow.

CCXCI

Wine is forbidden, it is said, but it is only forbidden in regard to him who makes no measure of what he drinks, and the one with whom he drinks. All the conditions once held in observance, will not the wise man drink?

CCXCII

They who dwell within the tombs have become dust and ashes, are scattered to the four winds, and divided from each other. Alas! what drink is this with which mankind is filled, and which holds him thus infatuated until the day of the last judgment?

CCXCIII

Be welcome, solace of my soul, scarcely can I believe that thou art here. Drink, for God's love, if not for mine, drink wine till I can doubt thy being.

CCXCIV

There are those who have never passed the night in the search after truth, who have no thoughts beyond their narrow lives. These thou mayest behold clothed in the garments of the great, and disparaging the walker in the perfect way.

CCXCV

Thou shouldst not plant the tree of bitterness in thy heart, but rather flutter at all times the leaves of the book of joy. Thou shouldst drink thy wine, and pursue the desire of thy heart, for behold the length of thy stay on this earth is quickly measured.

CCXCVI

Thou settest snares around us manifold, and sayest, "Death to ye, if ye enter therein." Thou layest the lures Thyself, and then givest over Thy victim to doom.

CCXVII

Enjoy thy life while it remaineth to thee, for many other wayfarers will journey through the world. The soul crieth out after the body has been torn away from it, and the crown of thy head will be trampled under the feet of potters.

CCXCVIII

Happy is the heart of him who hath gone through life unknown. Whom the vestment of hypocrisy hath never clothed, who like unto the sage is translated into the skies, instead of rejoicing like an owl among the ruins of this world.

McCARTHY VERSION

CCXCIX

Rose, thou art like unto a lovely face; Rose, thou art like unto a precious ruby. O, shifting Fortune, every second you seem strange to me, yet you are like unto a familiar friend.

CCC

The drunkard who is rich bringeth himself to destruction, his riotous drunkenness is a scandal to mankind. I will therefore place this hashish in my cup of wine and thus I will strangle the serpent of my grief.

CCCI

The drinker alone can understand the language of the rose and of the vine, and not the faint-hearted, and the cheap of wit. To those who have no knowledge of hidden things, ignorance is to be pardoned, for the drunkard only is capable of tasting the delights which are an accompaniment thereof.

CCCII

Open the gate, for only Thou canst open it; show me the road, for only Thou canst show it. I will reach no hand to those who would fain uplift me, for Thou alone art eternal.

CCCIII

Lulled by a vain hope, I scattered to the winds a portion of my life, and that before I had known in this world a day of enjoyment. Alas! I fear now that fleeting time will not allow me to repay myself for the days that are past.

CCCIV

It is I who am the chief frequenter of the tavern, it is I who wade knee deep in rebellion against Thy commandment. It is I who the whole night through, soaked in wine, hurl the complaint of my wounded heart against the ears of God.

CCCV

When I am drunk, the whole world might roll like a ball into a hole, and I should not care more than for a barley-corn. Yestere'en I pawned myself at the tavern for a stoup of wine, "Lo, what an excellent gage!" says the tapster.

CCCVI

For how many nights has sleep fled from our eyelids, before the cruel parting has torn our hearts asunder! Arise, my beloved, and let us live for an instant before the breath of dawn blows upon us. Alas, for how long a time it will still breathe when our breath is extinct!

CCCVII

Two things are the base of wisdom, the pearls of tradition: eat not of all that is eaten, hold aloof from all that is evil.

CCCVIII

How long wilt thou condemn us, O foolish devotee? We are the frequenters of the tavern, we are given over to drunkenness without cease. Thou art entirely absorbed in thy chaplet, in thy hypocrisy, in thy vile devices. We follow the desires of our hearts with the wine-cup forever in our hand, and our loved one beside us.

CCCIX

The steady march of springs and autumns sweeps the leaves from our life's trees. Drink wine, friend, for the wise have wisely said, "Life's cares are a poison, and wine its best antidote."

CCCX

Thou who hast burned, who burnest, who deservest still to burn, feeding the fire of hell, why dost thou call on God to pardon Omar? What has God to do with thee? How darest thou appeal to His pity?[1]

[1] See Fitzgerald Preface.

CCCXI

Art thou full of heaviness? Take thou a morsel of hashish, as large as a grain of barley, or drink but a small measure of rose-coloured wine. Thou art become a sage, truly! Thou mayst not drink this, thou takest not that! Nothing is left to thee but to eat pebbles—go, and eat them then.

CCCXII

No longer, O Reason, will I continue to be thy slave; wherefore should I care if in this world I remain for fifty years, or but one day is left to me? Come, let us drink wine from the flagon before we ourselves become pots in the shop of the potter.

CCCXIII

I met a wise man in a drunkard's house, and asked him tidings of the absent ones. He answered, "Drink your wine, for many like unto us have gone hence, and not returned again."

CCCXIV

I know not if He who created me belongs to happy paradise or terrible hell, but I know that a cup of wine, a fair paramour, and a lute on the borders of a pleasant land, rejoice my heart in this present hour, and that thou livest on the promise of a future paradise.

CCCXV

It is dawn, ever welcome, beloved, sing your song, and drink your wine, for the long array of months has overthrown a thousand kings like Djemshid and Kai-Khosrou.

CCCXVI

I drink of the wine, and they who oppose it come about me on the right hand and on the left, to persuade me to renounce it, saying that wine is the enemy of religion. But, therefore, because I hold myself an adversary of the faith, I wish by Allah to drink thereof, for it is permitted to drink the blood of one's enemy.

CCCXVII

If I were free to use my will, if I were free from cares of good and evil in this worthless world, how willingly would I choose never to have come here, never to have lived here, never to depart hence.

CCCXVIII

How is it that grapes are sour at first, and after, sweet? How is it that wine is bitter? If a bit of wood is fashioned with a knife into a viol, how is it that the same knife can fashion a lute?

CCCXIX

From afar came one foul-favoured, clad about as in smoke of hell, sex-less, horrible. He broke our flagon, spilling the red wine, and boasted that the deed was glorious.

CCCXX

Since we abide in this world in no fixed habitation, it truly would be a fatal error to abstain from the wine-cup and the caresses of our beloved ones. Oh, man of peace, how long wilt thou continue thy vain reasoning on the creation and eternity of this world? — What to me will be its antiquity or newness when I no longer abide herein?

CCCXXI

Plague upon heart-breaking hypocrisy, O cup-bearer: up, and hither with the wine, O cup-bearer; to buy it, sell the prayer-cloth and the sacred turban, for wine is the end of all my argument.

CCCXXII

O heart, when thou sittest at the feet of thy beloved, thou hast lost thyself to find thyself. When thou hast quaffed the wine of nothingness, thou art set apart from those that are, and those that are no more.

McCARTHY VERSION

CCCXXIII

The commandments of religion only insist on the fulfilling of thy obligation to the Deity. Refuse not thy morsel of bread to another, refrain thy tongue from slander, and seek not to render evil to thy neighbour. If thou doest this, I myself promise thee the future life. — Bring hither the wine!

CCCXXIV

Bestir thyself, since thou art cooped beneath this inexorable vault, drink wine, since thou art perforce in this luckless world. If anything from first to last be but earth, at least bear thyself as if thou still didst walk the earth, not as if thou wert already laid beneath it.

CCCXXV

O heart, my heart you will never know the secret, you will never top the wisdom of the wise. Make for yourself a heaven here with wine, for who knows if you will or will not relish the higher heaven?

CCCXXVI

Choose ignorance, if you have wit, that you may take the bowl of wine from the hands of the drinkers of eternity. But if you are ignorant, ignorance is not for thee. It is not given to all the ignorant to taste the sweets of ignorance.

CCCXXVII

I cannot live without wine, I could not bear the body's burden but for the juice of the vine. I am the slave of that sweet moment when the cup-bearer offers me yet another draught, and I am too drunk to take it.

CCCXXVIII

How long will these wrangle on the five and four, O cup-bearer! It is as hard to understand one as one hundred thousand, O cup-bearer; we are but earth, so tune the lute, O cup-bearer; we are but as soft air, bring wine, O cup-bearer!

CCCXXIX

Wert thou as wise as Aristotle, wert thou as potent as Roman Cæsar, or Monarch of Cathay, drink, drink, I say, in the cup of Djemshid, for the grave is the end of all, yea, wert thou Bahram himself, the tomb is thy final abode.

CCCXXX

A sheikh said to a harlot, "Thou art drunk; each moment thou art caught in some one's nets." She answered unto him, "O sheikh, I am all that thou callest thy servant, but thou, art thou all thou appearest to be?"

CCCXXXI

We have wine, and the well-beloved, and the morning, O cup-bearer. Not from us cometh renunciation, O cup-bearer. How long wilt thou tell the tales of old, O cup-bearer? Bring me sweetly the peace of the soul, O cup-bearer.

CCCXXXII

It is my pleasure to drown my reason in wine: our secret sessions are called for the service of the wine-cup: O hermit of the heart, do not, in your pilgrimage, deny yourself the cup: be like us, who are fire-worshippers, and delight in the lip of the lover.

CCCXXXIII

We take the Koran in one hand, and the wine-cup in the other, and behold we are lured now to the lawful, now to the unlawful delight. Thus it comes to pass that underneath yon spangled bowl we are neither all faithful, nor all faithless.

CCCXXXIV

Drink wine, for behold how the juice moisteneth the sides of the jar. How often need I say that I have broken the seals of all my vows? Yet, is it not better to break the seals of a hundred oaths, than to break the sides of a jar of wine?

McCARTHY VERSION

CCCXXXV

Do not set the estimate of your life above sixty years; do not set your foot anywhere without being intoxicated. So long as your skull is not made into a jar, do not set the gourd from your shoulders, nor the cup from your hand.

CCCXXXVI

Arise, dash down the cares of fleeting life, be merry in this momentary being. If heaven had been constant in its gifts to others, remember that you could never have taken their turn of enjoyment.

CCCXXXVII

When I gaze, I seem to see the grass, the streams of paradise. Earth, freed from winter's hell, seems turned to heaven. Rest with some fair face in this fair place.

CCCXXXVIII

Follow the footsteps of the kalendars, abide in the tavern, think only of wine, women, and song. With cup and can, O well-beloved, drink and cease to battle of vain things.

CCCXXXIX

We have broken all our vows, we have closed the gates of good and evil fame; do not blame us for being foolish in our folly, for we are drunk with the wine of love.

CCCXL

Reach me tulip-tinted wine, pour the pure blood of the vine from the throat of the flagon, for where in these days shall I find so true a friend save in the wine-cup?

CCCXLI

Those that have gone hence before us, O cup-bearer, are lapped in the dust of pride, O cup-bearer; drink then thy wine, and hear the truth I tell; the words they whispered were but wind, O cup-bearer.

CCCXLII

Thou hast stamped us with a strange seal, Thou hast made us do strange deeds. How can I be better than I am, for such as I am, You drew me from the void?

CCCXLIII

Be wise, O my fair, and lighten the load of thy lover, for all thy goodly show will not endure, like all the world thy feet will go down to the dust.

CCCXLIV

Thou who commandest the quick and the dead, the wheel of heaven obeys Thy hand. What if I am evil, am I not Thy slave? Which then is the guilty one? Art Thou not Lord of all?

CCCXLV

O offspring of the four and five, art puzzled by the four and five? Drink deep, for I have told thee time on time, that once departed, thou returnest no more.

CCCXLVI

Now Thou art hidden, known of none, now Thou art displayed in all created things. It is for Thy own delight that Thou performest these wonders, being at once the sport and the spectator.

CCCXLVII

If you find fame in a town you are considered evil. If you live in a nook, you are looked upon as a schemer. The best thing for any man, were he a saint or a prophet, would be to live, knowing no one, known of no one.

CCCXLVIII

It is better to lighten one sad soul, than to people a world. It is nobler to enslave one free man with charity, than to set free a thousand slaves.

CCCXLIX

Lo, the moment for the morning wine, hear the muezzin, O cup-bearer. Here is a wine-house, here is wine, we are ready, O cup-bearer. This is no time for prayers, cease babbling of devotion. drink and be still, O cup-bearer.

CCCL

If I am the friend of wine and drunkenness, why should I be blamed? If all unlawful deeds produced intoxication, there would be little sober reason left on earth.

CCCLI

In this juggling house of life, friendship is a vain thing; be wise and trust none. Bear thy pains, seek no remedy, be cheerful in thy sorrows, and seek not to share them with others.

CCCLII

O my King, how many a man like me in the rose-bower, in the fair fellowship of dancers and drinkers, remains aloof, an onlooker? A garden, a wine-jar, and a lute are better than Paradise with its streams and houris.

CCCLIII

I saw a hermit in a desert place. He was neither heretic nor true believer, hè had neither riches, nor creed, nor God, nor truth, nor law, nor knowledge. Where is the man of like courage in this world or the other world?

CCCLIV

Wouldst thou have the world at thy feet, then strengthen thy soul, and believe with me that wisdom lies in drinking wine and daffing the world aside.

CCCLV

It is well to be of good reputation: it is ill to complain of Heaven's injustice. It is better to be drunk with the blood of the vine than swollen with sham piety.

CCCLVI

Give me to drink of that flower-coloured wine, O cup bearer; pour, for my soul is laden with sorrow, O cup-bearer; pour, I say, for in setting me free from myself, it sets me free also from the cares of this world, O cup-bearer.

CCCLVII

Give me delightful wine, O cup-bearer, that divine juice which, like a chain of linked rings, holds fools and sages in sweet servitude.

CCCLVIII

This wheel of heaven seeks my destruction and thine, it plots against my soul and thine. Come, seat thyself upon the grass, for in a little while fresh grass will spring from this dust of mine and thine.

CCCLIX

We are all lovers, all bibbers, all worshippers of the vine, we are all in the tavern free from thoughts of good and evil. Trouble not our intelligence, for we are all drunk.

CCCLX

Last night in the tavern my familiar friend held out the cup and bade me drink of it. "I will not drink," I said, and he replied, "Drink for my love's sake."

CCCLXI

Yesterday I sat by a stream with a beautiful girl and a vessel of wine. Before me stood the shell whose pearl gave forth such light that the cock crew, believing it was dawn.

CCCLXII

Do not heed the speech of frivolous women, but seize the cup of clear wine from the hands of the comely. All who ever trod this earth have vanished one by one, and who can say that one has c'er returned?

CCCLXIII

When my soul and thine have flitted, they will place a couple of bricks upon my grave and thine. Then to make bricks for other tombs they will send to the kiln my dust and thine.

CCCLXIV

That palace which touched the heavens, before whose door kings bowed the head, we saw the ringdove on its battlements, resting and crying, "Coo, coo, coo, coo!"[1]

CCCLXV

To drink and delight in fair faces is wiser than to affect a hypocritical faith. If all the lovers, and all the joyous topers, go to hell, nobody will want to go to Paradise.[2]

CCCLXVI

What is the good of our entrance to, our exit from, this world? What has become of all our hopes? Where is the breath of all the wise and good who have been turned to dust?

CCCLXVII

We drink wine old and new, we would sell the world for a brace of barley-corns. Do you know where you go after death? Give me some wine and go where you please.

CCCLXVIII

Flee from the lessons of learning and piety, turn to the tresses round the lovely face, spill the blood of the vine in your cup before time spills thy blood on the earth.

[1] See Quatrains Printed in Second Edition Only, xx.
[2] See Quatrains Printed in Second Edition Only, lxv.

CCCLXIX

The strong wine of ourselves has exalted us with joy; we that were lowly, hold our heads high; now we are free from the body's dominion, we have returned to earth from whence we rose.

CCCLXX

A fig for mosques, prayers, fastings; hie thee to the tavern and get drunk, even if thou hast to beg for it. Drink, my Khayyám, for soon that earth of thine will be fashioned into cups and bowls and jars.

CCCLXXI

Not for one hour can I shake off the world, not for one moment can I buy content. Long, long have I served in the school of sorrow, and still am master neither of this world nor the next.

CCCLXXII

To you this earthly cup is big with a soul, like to a jasmin bearing blossoms of the Judas tree. Nay, the fair clearness of the wine deceives me, it is clear water big with liquid fire.

CCCLXXIII

This world of dust from corner to corner, notwithstanding the study of the Wise-Eyed, will see no better production of the faithless earth than clear wine and lovely beings.

CCCLXXIV

Hearken unto me, thou that hast not yet seen thy friends grow old. Vex not thyself about the wheel of heaven, content thee with what thou hast, and placidly behold life's juggles with the destinies of men.

CCCLXXV

Be genial to the genial revellers, follow, my friend, the wisdom of Khayyám. Away with prayers, away with fasts; drink deep and be kindly.

CCCLXXVI

Are you not ashamed, O Mullah, thus to ignore all the ordinances and all the prohibitions? Even if you heaped up all the treasures of the earth, what can you do with them at last, save leave them to some one else?

CCCLXXVII

Do not call to mind the day which has passed from you; do not lament for unborn to-morrow, do not build on the coming and the past away, take the fair hour, and do not cast your life to the wind.

CCCLXXVIII

If I, like God, were master of the heavens, I would blot them from the world, and fashion new skies beneath which free man might gain his heart's desire.

CCCLXXIX

Every day at dawn, I will haste to the wine-house with the subtle kalendars. O, Thou that hast the key to hidden secrets, give me faith if Thou wouldst have me prayerful.

CCCLXXX

Thanks to you, mirror-like disc of heaven, thanks to the favours of this fleeting time which fall but to the basest, my cheeks, hollow as cups, are brimmed with tears, and my heart, like a jar, is full of blood.

CCCLXXXI

There is a bull in heaven named Parwin, there is another bull that bears the earth; open the eyes of knowledge and behold this drove of asses placed between two bulls.

CCCLXXXII

Lo, light, and wine, and plenilune, O cup-bearer; lo, the beauty lovelier than the captain-jewel, O cup-bearer; talk not of earth unto this burning heart, cast it not to the wind; bring drink, O cup-bearer.

CCCLXXXIII

Vainly you rave of ruby-tinted lips, vainly you whisper of the sweetness of wine, and the melodies of lute and dulcimer. Be God my witness, that till you sever the ties of earth, your existence is vain.

CCCLXXXIV

All that thou sayest of me is steeped in hate, thou callest me unbeliever, atheist; I am what I am, and make a vouch of it, but is it just for thee to rail at me?

CCCLXXXV

I can renounce all, but wine — never. I can console myself for all else, but for wine — never. Is it possible for me to become a good mussulman, and to give up old wine? — Never.

CCCLXXXVI

Clear comely wine, I fain would drink so deep of thy divinity that those beholding me from afar should blend my being with thine and say, "O Lord Wine, whence comest thou?"

CCCLXXXVII

Before you drain the cup of death, before the wheel of time has hurled you back, get goods and gear while you are here, for in the lower land, no welcome has the empty hand.

CCCLXXXVIII

Dearest, while we tread this earth, lift the jar and drink its wine. Ere the potter turns to shape from thy dust and mine, other jars for other lips, fill my cup and empty thine.

CCCLXXXIX

Thy cup is brimmed with molten rubies, O cup-bearer; feed my soul with the flashes of that flaming stone, O cup-bearer, give to my hands that holy bowl, O cup-bearer, that I might lend new being to my soul, O cup-bearer.

CCCXC

While still you boast of bones, and veins, and sinews, abide in the circle of your destiny. Yield nothing to your enemy, were he Rustem, son of Zal; be under no bond of obligation to your friend, were he Hatim Tai.

CCCXCI

Do you desire a happy life, do you desire a heart devoid of care, then drink, drink, drink with every passing minute, and from each draught find new delight in life.

CCCXCII

I have swept the threshold of the tavern with my hair, I have given the good-bye to thoughts of good and ill, of this world and the other. When I am drunk, they might both roll into a ditch, without my heeding them more than two barley-corns.

CCCXCIII

I passed into the potter's house of clay, and saw the craftsman busy at his wheel, turning out pots and jars fashioned from the heads of kings, and the feet of beggars.

CCCXCIV

Since thou knowest the secrets, O youth, why so racked with despairing doubts? Though the wheel of life does not turn to thy pleasure, still be merry in this hour, while still thou drawest breath.

CCCXCV

Last eve I broke against a stone an earthen cup, drunk in the doing of this foolish deed. Methought the cup protested unto me "I was like thee, thou wilt be like to me."

CCCXCVI

Bear greeting from me to Khayyám and then say, "Oh, inexperienced Khayyám, when then have I said that wine is unlawful? To the foolish it is unlawful, but to the wise it is lawful."

CCCXCVII

Still to me my breath, thanks to the cup-bearer, remains, but in the fellowship of created things, discontent remains. Of yestere'en's wine, only a flagon remains, but I know not how much of life yet remains.

CCCXCVIII

When the hand possesses a loaf of wheaten bread, two measures of wine, and a piece of flesh, when seated with tulip-cheeks in some lonely spot, behold such joy as is not given to all sultans.

CCCXCIX

Be not rough with the pot-companions, be not gruff with the wise-acres, but drink your wine, for whether you drink wine or no, if you are seared with hell-fire, you shall not hope to pass into paradise.

CCCC

In the assemblage of lovers we all are seated, from the labour of days we have all escaped, we have emptied the cup of the wine of our desire, we are all free and tranquil and intoxicated.

CCCCI

Thou hast broken my wine-jug, O Lord, Thou hast closed against me the door of delight, O Lord, Thou hast spilt upon the earth my clear wine; earth be in my mouth unless Thou art drunk, O Lord.

CCCCII

A mouthful of wine is better than empire. Abjure all save wine. One cup of wine is better than the kingdom of Feridoun. The tile which covers the mouth of the wine-jar is more precious than the crown of Kai-Khosrou.

CCCCIII

Lo, the season of roses is at hand, and then it delights me to defy the law of Alkoran with budding girls of tulip-cheeks ; for a measure of five days my cups shall convert the green grass into beds of tulips.

CCCCIV

Bear greeting from me to Mustapha, and then with all respect enquire thus, " Why, O Lord All-Wise, does Alkoran make the sour salted curds and water lawful, and pure wine unlawful ? "

CCCCV

O thou that turnest day and night to lust after the world, dost thou not think upon the heavy day ? Look to thyself and to thy latest breath, and to the end that thou must share with others.

CCCCVI

We made the mouth of a jar our place of prayer, the ruby wine made us seem truly men ; it is better to be in the street of the tavern, than to leave life to wither in the mosque.

CCCCVII

Make the conditions of this world easy unto my heart, and make my evil actions secret from creation. Give me to-day my pleasure, and to-morrow inflict on me whatever Thy liberality deems meet.

CCCCVIII

Now that the brown bird tells his tale, his tale, think of red wine in the hands of topers, topers. Arise, approach, for the rose expands in gladness, for two or three days thy pains avenge, avenge.

CCCCIX

We are the keys of the scheme of existence, we to wise eyes are the very essence of divinity. Is not the hoop of the world like unto a ring, and are not we the wrought gems thereof ?

CCCCX

If I feed in famine-hunted Ramazan, it is not through forgetfulness, but because the clinging fasts have changed my days to nights, and deluded me into believing that I ate the morning meal.

CCCCXI

While I searched the pages of the Book of Love, a wise man lifted up his voice and said, "Happy is he who holds in his house a girl more lovely than the moon, and dreams of a night-time longer than a year."

CCCCXII

If thou canst understand the circuit of this wheel, thou must perceive two kinds of men, those knowing good and evil, and those that know neither themselves nor aught else.

CCCCXIII

O friend, abide tranquil in thy day, nor grieve for fleeting time in vain, when the garb of life is rent, it matters little what thou hast done, what thou hast said, and in what way thou hast been stained.

CCCCXIV

Whenever on this green earth we are affected by joy, like unto the green steed of the sky, then with green youth I eat green hashish on the green sward until I lie below the green of the earth.

CCCCXV

O thou, the quintessence of the sum of existence, cease a moment to think upon evil gain, take one cup of wine from the eternal Saki, and set thyself free from the cares of both worlds.

CCCCXVI

Arise, arise from thy place of sleep, O cup-bearer, give us, O give us clear wine, O cup-bearer, ere yet the cups of our heads are made into flagons, pour from thy flagon into our cup, O cup-bearer.

CCCCXVII

To the wise reader in the Book of Life, joy, sorrow, weal, and woe are all alike. Since good and ill alike must have their end, it matters little whether our portion be good or evil.

CCCCXVIII

Cease babbling of the Koran, cup-bearer, give me free quarters at the wine-house, O cup-bearer; the night of those free quarters in the inn shall be my night of nights, O cup-bearer.

CCCCXIX

Know you why at the hour of the dawning the cock shrills his frequent clarion? It is but to remind you by the mirror of morning, that from your existence a night has slipped, and you are still ignorant.

CCCCXX

Art wise enough to learn in little the truth of man? A miserable being moulded from the mud of sorrow. A little while he eats upon this earth, then lifts his foot to wander hence.

CCCCXXI

Never with cheer a drop of water do we consume, but from the hand of sorrow we consume wine. We never dip a bit of bread in salt, but we consume our own vitals.

CCCCXXII

Lord, free me from this puzzle of the more and less. Absorb me in Thee and free me from myself. While I can reason I know good and evil: intoxicate me and free me from knowledge of good and evil.

CCCCXXIII

Oh Lord, have mercy on my captive heart, have mercy on my sorrow-laden breast, have mercy on my tavern-turning foot, and on my hand that catches at the cup.

CCCCXXIV

I am what Thy power fashioned. I have lived a hundred years rich in Thy gifts and grace. I would fain live yet one hundred years of sin and see in the end if the sum of my faults or Thy pity be the greater.

CCCCXXV

Say, what man on earth has never sinned? Say, who could live and never sin? If, therefore, because I do ill You punish me by ill, say, then, where is the difference between Thee and me?

CCCCXXVI

Justice is the soul of the world, and the world is a body. The angels are its senses, the skies its elements, humanity its limbs. This is the eternal unity, all else is delusion.

CCCCXXVII

The cares of this world are not worth one barley-corn. We are happy. If we breakfast we do not dine. We are happy. Naught cooked comes to us from the kitchen. We beseech no one. We are happy.

CCCCXXVIII

My poor heart, sympathetic and distraught, is deeply drowned in the love of my well-beloved. The day the wine of love was poured, my share was drawn from the blood of my heart.

CCCCXXIX

They bid me drink less wine, and wonder why I will not renounce. Why, because the face of my friend is the morning wine. Could there be a better reason?

CCCCXXX

O thou whose lip is wet with the water of life, do not let the lip of the cup come nigh. May I lose my name if I do not slake my vengeance in the blood of the cup that dares to lay its lips to thine.

CCCCXXXI

Take cup and flagon in thy hands, beloved, let us hasten to the fields and streams, for many maidens lovely as the moon have been turned at last into cups and flagons.

CCCCXXXII

Do not riot in the tavern; abide there without brawling. Sell your turban, sell your Koran to buy wine, then hurry past the mosque without going in.

CCCCXXXIII

Never wound with sorrow a joyous heart, nor break with the stones of torment one moment of delight. Since none can say what is to come, our needs are wine, a beloved, and desireful ease.

CCCCXXXIV

Some meditate of religions and beliefs, some sway bewildered betwixt doubt and knowledge. Suddenly the watcher cries, "Fools, your road is not here nor there."

CCCCXXXV

Where are ruby lips, jewels of youth? Where is the scented wine that soothes the soul? It is forbidden by the Moslem creed. Drink, for where is the Moslem creed?

CCCCXXXVI

O evil-doer, never doing good, who seek shelter with Divinity, beware of trusting to be pardoned, for the nothing-doer resembles not the doer any more than the doer represents the nothing-doer.

CCCCXXXVII

Best to dwell in joy alone, best to take the cup from the fingers of the most fair, best the intoxication of the kalendars, best is wine of all that lies between the moon and the earth.

CCCCXXXVIII

The heaven is a bowl inverted over our heads. The wise are shamed and feeble, but the cup and jar are fast friends. They are lip to lip though blood flows between them.

CCCCXXXIX

The drop of water sorrowed to be sundered from the ocean. Ocean smiling said, "We are all in all, God is within and around us, and we are divided but by an imperceptible point."

CCCCXL

Oh, would that there were a place to rest, that by this road we might arrive; oh, that after a hundred thousand years we might arise anew from the heart of the earth like the green grasses.

CCCCXLI

Weep not for this bustling world, call for wine and for your dear, for that from which man dropped to-day, he seeks to enter again to-morrow.

CCCCXLII

Know thyself if thou art wise, and see what thou hast brought with thee, and what thou wilt take away. You will not drink forsooth because you must die. Why, whether you drink or no, you must die.

CCCCXLIII

Let not the weight of the world oppress you, do not vex your soul with the thought of those who have passed away, yield not your heart save to the fairest of the fair, never lack good wine nor cast your life to the wind.

CCCCXLIV

Whenever you can get two measures of wine, drink, where-ever you may be, for he who acts thus is free from thy scorn or my scorn.

CCCCXLV

They bid you drink no wine under penalty of fiery pains on the day of reckoning. Nevertheless, the moment in which wine makes you happy is better than the rewards of this world or the next.

CCCCXLVI

Alas, Fate will not let me live anigh thee, yet I cannot bear to live a hair's breadth apart from thee. I dare not share my woes with anyone. Oh, hard lot, strange sorrow, fair passion.

CCCCXLVII

If you delight in darkening the free heart, wear mourning for your wits your whole life long, and be accursed for the fool you are.

CCCCXLVIII

I would that God rebuilt the world anew, and that I might see the work begun. I would that God blotted my name from the roll of life, or of His bounty made life seem more fair.

CCCCXLIX

Give me a flagon of red wine, a book of verses, a loaf of bread, and a little idleness. If with such store I might sit by thy dear side in some lonely place, I should deem myself happier than a king in his kingdom.

CCCCL

We trust in Divine Goodness which delivers us from sin and duty, for where Thy loving kindness is, he who does not, and he who does are equal.

CCCCLI

Be resigned to sorrow if you wish to escape it, do not complain of your hurts if you would have them healed. If you would fain taste the joys of riches, then thank Providence for your poverty.

CCCCLII

The flowers are full in blossom, O cup-bearer; bring wine and quit your prayers, O cup-bearer; ere yet death's angel rises up against us, come cup in hand, and be happy awhile with the beloved, O cup-bearer.

CCCCLIII

Drink wine, dear friend, and delight in your beloved, give smug hypocrisy the go-by. Do you follow the law of Mahommed, then take a cup of wine from the bowl when Ali plays the cup-bearer.

CCCCLIV

In the kitchen of life, you savour only the smoke. How long will you study in sorrow the problem of being and not being? This world is loss to those that cling to it. Cast it adrift, and lo! the loss is gain.

CCCCLV

Oh, Thou whose essence is unknowable to mind, Thou who heedest neither our faults nor our virtues, I am drunk with sins, but my trust in Thee makes me sober, I count upon Thy clemency.

CCCCLVI

Though we have no wish to vex men in their sleep, to shock the night with their despairing cries, still do not pride yourself either on your wealth or your comeliness, for a single night may sweep them both away.

CCCCLVII

If from the first You made me know myself, why after would You sunder me from myself? If from the first it was Your purpose to abandon me, why did You fling me helpless into the middle of this world?

CCCCLVIII

If the ways of the world were but based on imitation, all days would be holidays. Were it not for those vain threatenings, every-one might live life to his own liking.

CCCCLIX

Heart, my heart, if you free yourself from earthly cares, you will become pure soul and scale the skies. Then what a shame and sorrow to have dwelt on earth!

CCCCLX

O potter, have a care if you are wise, how long will you degrade the clay of man? It is the finger of Feridoun, it is the hand of Kai-Khosrou, that you place upon the wheel. What are you thinking of?

CCCCLXI

If in this life you feasted full, what then? Suppose the latest of your days has come, what then? If you have lived a hundred happy years and have yet a hundred years to live, what then?

CCCCLXII

Knowest thou why the lily and the cypress have such fair renown with men? Because the one, with ten tongues, is silent; because the other with a hundred hands, keeps them from picking and stealing.

CCCCLXIII

Behold in the zephyr the robe of the rose expanding, the nightingale delighting in the beauty of the rose; sit in the shade of the rose, for many times this rose from earth has come and unto earth has gone.

CCCCLXIV

Woe's me for wasted life, for prohibited pleasures, and contaminated bodies. My face is blackened for not having done what Thou hast ordered. How then if I had done what Thou hast not ordered?

CCCCLXV

How long shall I vex me with the have or have-not, with wondering if I should or should not pass life pleasantly? Nay, fill the cup, my cup-bearer, for in truth I know not if I shall breathe out the breath I now breathe in.

CCCCLXVI

In this house of life, philosopher, drink red wine, so every atom of thy dust which the wind yet shall carry, will fall steeped in wine, on the threshold of the tavern.

The Quatrains of Omar Khayyám

Translated into English Verse by

E. H. WHINFIELD

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

On Reading *the* Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám *in a* Kentish Rose Garden

BESIDE a Dial in the leafy close,
Where every bush was burning with the rose,
With million roses falling flake by flake
Upon the lawn in fading summer snows:

I read the Persian Poet's rhyme of old,
Each thought a ruby in a ring of gold—
Old thoughts so young, that, after all these years,
They're writ on every rose-leaf yet unrolled.

You may not know the secret tongue aright
The Sunbeams on their rosy tablets write;
Only a poet may perchance translate
Those ruby-tinted hieroglyphs of light.

MATHILDE BLIND.

THE QUATRAINS OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

ALIF

I

'TIS but a day we sojourn here below,
And all the gain we get is grief and woe,
And then, leaving life's riddles all unsolved,
And burdened with regrets, we have to go.

II

Khâja! grant one request, and only one,
Wish me God-speed, and get your preaching done;
I walk aright, 't is you who see awry;
Go! mend your sight, and leave Khayyám alone.

III

Arise! and come, and of thy courtesy
Relieve my weary heart's perplexity,
And fill my goblet, so that I may drink,
Or ere they make their goblets out of me.

IV

When I am dead, with wine my body lave,
For obit chant a bacchanalian stave,
And, if you need me at the day of doom,
Beneath the tavern threshold seek my grave.

V

Since no one can assure thee of the morrow,
Rejoice thy heart to-day, and banish sorrow
With moonbright wine, fair moon, for heaven's moon
Will look for us in vain on many a morrow.

VI

In Allah's name, say, wherefore set the wise
Their hearts upon this house of vanities?
Whene'er they think to rest them from their toils,
Death takes them by the hand, and says, "Arise."

VII

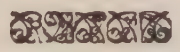
Men say the Koran holds all heavenly lore,
But on its pages seldom care to pore;
The lucid lines engraven on the bowl, —
That is the text they dwell on evermore.

VIII

Blame not the drunkards, you who wine eschew;
Had I but grace, I would abstain like you;
And mark me, vaunting zealot, you commit
A hundredfold worse sins than drunkards do.

IX

What though 't is fair to view, this form of man,
I know not why the Heavenly Artisan
Hath set these tulip cheeks and cypress forms
To deck the mournful halls of earth's divan.



BE

X

So many cups of wine will I consume,
Its bouquet shall exhale from out my tomb,
And every one that passes by shall halt,
And reel and stagger with that mighty fume.

XI

Here in this tavern haunt I make my lair,
Pawning for wine, heart, soul, and all I wear,
  Without a hope of bliss or fear of bale,
Rapt above water, earth, and fire, and air.

XII

Quoth fish to duck, "'T will be a sad affair
If this brook leaves its channel dry and bare;"
  To whom the duck, "When I am dead and roasted,
The brook may mirage prove for aught I care."

TE

XIII

FROM doubt to clear assurance is a breath,
A breath from infidelity to faith;
  Oh, precious breath! enjoy it while you may,
'T is all that life can give, and then comes death.

XIV

Ah! wheel of heaven, to tyranny inclined,
'T was e'er your wont to show yourself unkind;
And, cruel earth, if they should cleave your breast,
What store of buried jewels they would find!

XV

My life lasts but a day or two, and fast
Sweeps by, like torrent stream or desert blast,
Howbeit, of two days I take no heed, —
The day that's future, and the day that's past.

XVI

Now that with youth and joy my age is rife,
I quaff enchanting wine, and list to fife;
Chide not at wine for all its bitter taste,
Its bitterness sorts well with human life!

XVII

O soul! whose lot it is to bleed with pain,
And daily change of fortune to sustain,
Into this body wherefore didst thou come,
Seeing thou must so soon go forth again?

XVIII

To-day is thine to spend, but not to-morrow,
Counting on morrows breedeth naught but sorrow;
Oh! squander not this breath that Heaven hath lent thee,
Nor make too sure another breath to borrow!

XIX

'T is labour lost thus to all doors to crawl;
Take thy good fortune, and thy bad withal;
Know for a surety each must play his game,
As from the box of fate the dice may fall.

XX

This jug did once, like me, love's sorrows taste,
And bonds of beauty's tresses once embraced,
This handle, which you see upon its side,
Has many a time twined round a slender waist!

XXI

Days changed to nights, ere you were born, or I
And on its business ever rolled the sky;
See you tread gently on this dust, perchance
'T was once the apple of some beauty's eye.

XXII

Pagodas, just as mosques, are homes of prayer,
'T is prayer that church-bells chime unto the air;
Yea, Church and Ka'ba, Rosary and Cross,
Are all but divers tongues of world-wide prayer.

XXIII

'T was writ at first, whatever was to be,
By pen unheeding bliss or misery,
Yea, writ upon the tablet once for all;
To murmur or resist is vanity.

XXIV

Behold these cups! can He who deigned to make them,
In wanton freak let ruin overtake them,
So many shapely feet and hands and heads,—
What love drives Him to make, what wrath to break them?

XXV

Death's terrors spring from baseless phantasy,
Death yields the tree of immortality;
Since 'Isa breathed new life into my soul,
Eternal death has washed its hands of me!

XXVI

Fate will not bend to humour man's caprice,
So vaunt not human powers, but hold your peace;
  Here must we stay, weighed down with grief for this,
That we were born so late, so soon decease.

XXVII

Khayyám! why weep you that your life is bad?
What boots it thus to mourn? Rather be glad.
  He that sins not can make no claim to mercy;
Mercy was made for sinners — be not sad.

XXVIII

All mortal ken is bounded by the veil,
To see beyond man's sight is all too frail;
  Yea! earth's dark bosom is his only home; —
Alas! 't were long to tell the doleful tale.

XXIX

In synagogue and cloister, mosque and school,
Hell's terrors and heaven's lures men's bosoms rule;
  But they who master Allah's mysteries,
Sow not this empty chaff their hearts to fool.

XXX

I dreamt a sage said, "Wherefore life consume
In sleep? Can sleep make pleasure's roses bloom?
Forgather not with Death's twin-brother, Sleep;
Thou wilt have sleep enough within thy tomb!"

XXXI

If the heart knew life's secrets here below,
At death 't would know God's secrets too, I trow,
But, if you know naught here, while still yourself,
To-morrow, stripped of self, what can you know?

XXXII

On that dread day when wrath shall rend the sky,
And darkness dim the bright stars' galaxy,
I'll seize the Loved One by His skirt, and cry,
"Why hast Thou doomed these guiltless ones to die?"

XXXIII

To knaves Thy secret we must not confide,
To comprehend it is to fools denied,
See then to what hard case Thou doomest men,
Our hopes from one and all perforce we hide.

XXXIV

Bring wine! my heart with dancing spirits teems;
Wake! fortune's waking is as fleeting dreams;
Quicksilver-like our days are swift of foot,
And youthful fire subsides like torrent streams.

XXXV

My law it is in pleasure's paths to stray,
My creed to shun the theologic fray;
I wedded Luck, and offered her a dower,
She said, "I want none, so thy heart be gay."

XXXVI

From mosque an outcast, and to church a foe,
Allah! of what clay didst thou form me so?
Like sceptic monk or ugly courtesan,
No hopes have I above, no joys below.

XXXVII

Yon turf, fringing the margent of the stream,
As down upon a cherub's lip might seem,
Or growth from dust of buried tulip cheeks;
Tread not that turf with scorn or light esteem!

XXXVIII

Hearts with the light of love illumined well,
Whether in mosque or synagogue they dwell,
Have *their* names written in the book of love,
Unvexed by hopes of heaven or fears of hell.

XXXIX

In drinking thus it is not my design
To riot, or transgress the law divine,
No! to attain unconsciousness of self
Is the sole cause I drink me drunk with wine.

XL

Drunkards are doomed to hell, so men declare;
Believe it not, 'tis but a foolish scare;
Heaven will be empty as this hand of mine,
If none who love good drink find entrance there.[1]

XLI

What is the world? A caravanserai,
A pied pavilion of night and day,
A feast whereat a thousand Jamsheds sat,
A couch whereon a thousand Bahrams lay.

[1] See Quatrains Printed in Second Edition Only, lxv.

XLII

In these proud halls, where Bahram once held sway,
The wild roes drop their young and tigers stray;
And that imperial hunter in his turn
To the great hunter Death is fallen a prey.

XLIII

Down fall the tears from skies enwrapt in gloom,
Without this drink the flowers could never bloom!
As now these flowers afford delight to me,
So shall my dust yield flowers, — God knows for whom.

XLIV

Some wine, a Houri maid for company,
A garden by a stream, with minstrelsy; —
Toil not to find a better Paradise,
If other Paradise indeed there be!

XLV

Thy body is a tent, which for a space
Doth the pure soul with royal presence grace;
When he departs, comes the tent-pitcher Death,
Strikes it, and moves to a new halting-place.

XLVI

Khayyám, who long time tents of science wrought,
Was burnt by trouble, and to ruin brought;
Fate's shears have cut his thread of life in twain,
And Death, the broker, sold him off for naught.[1]

XLVII

In the sweet spring a grassy bank I sought,
And thither wine and a fair Houri brought;
And, though the people call me graceless dog,
Gave not to Paradise another thought!

XLVIII

Make haste! soon must you quit this life below,
And pass the veil, and Allah's secrets know;
Make haste to take your pleasure while you may,
You wot not whence you come, nor whither go.

XLIX

To chant wine's praises is my daily task,
I live encompassed by cup, bowl, and flask;
Zealot! if reason be thy guide, then know
That guide of wine doth ofttimes guidance ask.

[1] See FitzGerald Preface.

L

O men of morals! why do ye defame
And thus misjudge me? I am not to blame.
Save weakness for the grape and Houri's charms,
What sins of mine can any of ye name?

LI

Skies like a zone our weary lives enclose,
And from our tear-stained eyes a Jihun flows;
Hell is a fire enkindled of our griefs;
Heaven but a dream of respite from our woes.

LII

I drown in sin — show me Thy clemency!
My soul is dark — make me Thy light to see!
A heaven that must be earned by painful works
I call a wage, not a gift fair and free.

LIII

Did He who made me fashion me for hell,
Or destine me for heaven? I cannot tell.
Yet will I not renounce cup, lute, and love,
Nor earthly cash for heavenly credit sell.

LIV

The good and evil with man's nature blent,
The weal and woe that Heaven's decrees have sent,
  Impute them not to motions of the skies, —
Skies than thyself ten times more impotent.

LV

He in whose bosom wisdom's seed is sown,
To waste a single day is never known;
  Either he strives to work great Allah's will,
Or else exalts the cup, and works his own.

LVI

When Allah mixed my clay, He knew full well
My future acts, and could each one foretell;
  Nothing without His fiat can I do;
Is it then just to punish me in hell?

LVII

If grace be grace and Allah gracious be,
Adam from Paradise why banished He?
  Grace to poor sinners shown is grace indeed;
In grace hard earned by works no grace I see.

LVIII

Dame Fortune's smiles are full of guile, beware!
Her scimitar is sharp to smite, take care!
If e'er she drop a sweetmeat in thy mouth,
'T is poisonous, — to swallow it forbear!

LIX

Where'er you see a rose or tulip bed,
Know that a mighty monarch's blood was shed;
And where the violet rears her purple tuft,
Be sure a black-moled girl doth rest her head.

LX

Wine is a melting ruby, cup its mine;
Cup is the body and the soul is wine;
These goblets smile with wine of ruddy hue,
Like tears, that blood of wounded hearts enshrine.

LXI

Drink wine! long must you sleep within the tomb,
Without a friend, or wife to cheer your gloom;
Hear what I say, and tell it not again,
"Never again can withered tulips bloom."

LXII

They preach how sweet those Houri brides will be,
But I say wine is sweeter — taste and see!
Hold fast this cash, and let that credit go,
And shun the din of empty drums like me.

LXIII

Once and again my soul did me implore,
To teach her, if I might, the heavenly lore;
I bade her learn the *Alíf* well by heart.
Who knows that letter well need learn no more.

LXIV

I came not hither of my own free-will,
And go against my wish, a puppet still;
Cupbearer! gird thy loins, and fetch some wine;
To purge the world's despite, my goblet fill.

LXV

Sweet is the breath of spring to rose's face,
And thy sweet face adds charm to this fair place;
To-day is sweet, but yesterday is sad,
And sad all mention of its parted grace.

LXVI

To-night pour wine, and sing a dulcet air,
And I upon thy lips will hang, O fair;
Yea, pour some wine as rosy as thy cheeks,
My mind is troubled like thy ruffled hair.

LXVII

Pen, tablet, heaven and hell I looked to see
Above the skies from all eternity;
At last the master-sage instructed me,
"Pen, tablet, heaven and hell are all in thee."

LXVIII

The fruit of certitude *he* cannot pluck,
The path that leads thereto who never struck,
Nor ever shook the bough with strenuous hand;
To-day is lost; hope for to-morrow's luck.

LXIX

Now spring-tide showers its foison on the land,
And lively hearts wend forth, a joyous band,
For 'Isa's[1] breath wakes the dead earth to life,
And trees gleam white with flowers, like Musa's[2] hand.

[1] Jesus. [2] Moses.

LXX

Alas for that cold heart, which never glows
With love, nor e'er that charming madness knows;
The days misspent with no redeeming love;—
No days are wasted half so much as those!

LXXI

The Master did himself these vessels frame,
Why should he cast them out to scorn and shame?
If he has made them well, why should he break them?
Yea, though he marred them, *they* are not to blame.

KHE

LXXII

When life is spent, what's Balkh or Nishapore
What sweet or bitter, when the cup runs o'er?
Come drink! full many a moon will wax and wane
In times to come, when we are here no more.

DAL

LXXIII

Life's caravan is hastening on its way;
Brood not on troubles of the coming day,
  But fill the wine-cup, ere sweet night be gone,
And snatch a pleasant moment, while you may.

LXXIV

He, who the world's foundations erst did lay,
Doth bruise full many a bosom day by day,
  And many a ruby lip and musky tress
Doth coffin in the earth, and shroud with clay.

LXXV

Comrades! I pray you, physic me with wine,
Make this wan amber face like rubies shine,
  And, if I die, use wine to wash my corpse,
And frame my coffin out of planks of vine!

LXXVI

When Allah yoked the coursers of the sun,
And launched the Pleiades their race to run,
  My lot was fixed in fate's high chancery;
Then why blame me for wrong that fate has done?

LXXVII

Whilom, ere youth's conceit had waned, methought
Answers to all life's problems I had wrought;
  But now, grown old and wise, too late I see
My life is spent, and all my lore is naught.

LXXVIII

He brought me hither, and I felt surprise,
From life I gather but a dark surmise,
  I go against my will; — thus, why I come,
Why live, why go, are all dark mysteries.

LXXIX

They at whose lore the whole world stands amazed,
Whose high thoughts, like Borák, to heaven are raised,
  Strive to know Thee in vain, and like heaven's
    wheel,
Their heads are turning, and their brains are dazed.

LXXX

The sages who have compassed sea and land,
Their secret to search out, and understand,—
  My mind misgives me if they ever solve
The scheme on which this universe is planned.

LXXXI

Ah! wealth takes wings, and leaves our hands all bare,
And death's rough hands delight our hearts to tear;
  And from the nether world let none escape,
To bring us tidings of the pilgrims there.

LXXXII

The wheel on high, still busied with despite,
Will ne'er unloose a wretch from his sad plight;
  But when it lights upon a smitten heart,
Straightway essays another blow to smite.

LXXXIII

Now is the volume of my youth outworn,
And all my spring-tide blossoms rent and torn.
  Ah, bird of youth! I marked not when you came,
Nor when you fled, and left me thus forlorn.

LXXXIV

These fools, by dint of ignorance most crass,
Think they in wisdom all mankind surpass;
And glibly do they damn as infidel
Whoever is not, like themselves, an ass.

LXXXV

Till the Friend pours his wine to glad my heart,
No kisses to my face will heaven impart:
They say, "Repent in time;" but how repent,
Ere Allah's grace hath softened my hard heart?

LXXXVI

When I am dead, take me and grind me small,
So that I be a warning unto all,
And knead me into clay with wine, and then
Use me to stop the wine-jar's mouth withal.

LXXXVII

What though the sky with its blue canopy
Doth close us in so that we cannot see,
In the etern Cupbearer's wine, methinks,
There float a myriad bubbles like to me.

LXXXVIII

Needs must the tavern-haunter bathe in wine,
For none can make a tarnished name to shine;
Go! bring me wine, for none can now restore
Its pristine sheen to this soiled robe of mine.

LXXXIX

Let him rejoice who has a loaf of bread,
A little nest wherein to lay his head,
Is slave to none, and no man slaves for him,—
In truth his lot is wondrous well bested.

XC

What adds my service to Thy majesty?
Or how can sin of mine dishonour Thee?
O pardon, then, and punish not, I know
Thou 'rt slow to wrath, and prone to clemency.

XCI

Hands, such as mine, that handle bowls of wine,
'T were shame to book and pulpit to confine;
Zealot! thou 'rt dry, and I am moist with drink,
Yea, far too moist to catch that fire of thine!

XCII

For ever may my hands on wine be stayed,
And my heart pant for some fair Houri maid!
They say, "May Allah aid thee to repent!"
Repent I could not, e'en with Allah's aid!

XCIII

To-day how sweetly breathes the temperate air,
The rains have newly laved the parched parterre;
And Bulbuls cry in notes of ecstasy,
"Thou too, O pallid rose, our wine must share."

XCIV

Ere you succumb to shocks of mortal pain,
The rosy grape-juice from your wine-cup drain.
You are not gold, that, hidden in the earth,
Your friends should care to dig you up again!

XCV

My coming brought no profit to the sky,
Nor does my going swell its majesty;
Coming and going put me to a stand,
Ear never heard their wherefore nor their why.

XCVI

The heavenly Sage, whose wit exceeds compare,
Counteth each vein, and numbereth every hair;
Men you may cheat by hypocritic arts,
But how cheat Him to whom all hearts are bare?

XCVII

Ah! wine lends wings to many a weary wight,
And beauty spots to ladies' faces bright;
All Ramazan I have not drunk a drop,
Thrice welcome then, O Bairam's blessed night!

XCVIII

To prayer and fasting when my heart inclined,
All my desire I surely hoped to find;
Alas! my purity is stained with wine,
My prayers are wasted like a breath of wind.

XCIX

Why spend life in vainglorious essay
All Being and Not-being to survey?
Since Death is ever pressing at your heels,
'T is best to drink or dream your life away.

C

Some hanker after that vain phantasy
Of Houris, feigned in Paradise to be;
  But, when the veil is lifted, they will find
How far they are from Thee, how far from Thee!

CI

In Paradise, they tell us, Houris dwell,
And fountains run with wine and oxymel:
  If these be lawful in the world to come,
Surely 't is right to love them here as well.

CII

A draught of wine would make a mountain dance,
Base is the churl who looks at wine askance;
  Wine is a soul our bodies to inspire,
A truce to this vain talk of temperance!

CIII

Oft doth my soul her prisoned state bemoan,
Her earth-born comate she would fain disown,
  And quit, did not the stirrup of the law
Upbear her foot from dashing on the stone.

CIV

What sage the eternal tangle e'er unravelled,
Or one short step beyond his nature travelled?
From pupils to the masters turn your eyes,
And see, each mother's son alike is gravelled.

CV

Crave not of worldly sweets to take your fill,
Nor wait on turns of fortune, good or ill;
Be of light heart, as are the skies above,
They roll their destined rounds, and then lie still.

CVI

What eye can pierce the veil of God's decrees,
Or read the riddle of earth's destinies?
Pondered have I for years threescore and ten,
But still am baffled by these mysteries.

CVII

They say, when the last trump shall sound its knell,
The Friend will sternly judge, and doom to hell.
Can aught but good from perfect goodness come?
Compose your trembling hearts, 't will all be well.

CVIII

Drink wine to root up metaphysic weeds,
And tangle of the two-and-seventy creeds;
Do not forswear that wondrous alchemy,
'T will turn to gold, and cure a thousand needs.

CIX

Though drink is wrong, take care with whom you drink,
And who you are that drink, and what you drink;
And drink at will, for, these three points observed,
Who but the very wise can ever drink?

CX

To drain a gallon beaker I design,
Yea, two great beakers, brimmed with richest wine;
Old faith and reason thrice will I divorce,
Then take to wife the daughter of the vine.

CXI

True I drink wine, like every man of sense,
For I know Allah will not take offence;
Before time was, He knew that I should drink,
And who am I to thwart His prescience?

CXII

When false dawn streaks the east with cold grey line,
Pour in your cups the pure blood of the vine;
The truth, they say, tastes bitter in the mouth,
This is a token that the "Truth" is wine.

CXIII

Now is the time earth decks her greenest bowers,
And trees, like Musa's hand, grow white with flowers!
As 't were at 'Isa's breath the plants revive,
While clouds brim o'er, like tearful eyes, with showers.

CXIV

The showers of grape-juice, which cupbearers pour,
Quench fires of grief in many a sad heart's core;
Praise be to Allah, who hath sent this balm
To heal sore hearts, and spirits' health restore!

CXV

Can alien Pharisees Thy kindness tell,
Like us, Thy intimates, who nigh Thee dwell?
Thou say'st, "All sinners will I burn with fire."
Say that to strangers, we know Thee too well.

CXVI

O comrades dear, when hither ye repair,
In times to come, communion sweet to share,
While the cupbearer pours your old Magh wine,
Call poor Khayyám to mind, and breathe a prayer.

CXVII

For me heaven's sphere no music ever made,
Nor yet with soothing voice my fears allayed:
If e'er I found brief respite from my woes,
Back to woe's thrall I was at once betrayed.

CXVIII

Sooner with half a loaf contented be,
And water from a broken crock, like me,
Than lord it over one poor fellow-man,
Or to another bow the vassal knee.

CXIX

While Moon and Venus in the sky shall dwell,
None shall see aught red grape-juice to excel:
O foolish publicans, what can you buy
One half so precious as the goods you sell?

CXX

They who endowed with wit and strength of brain,
As Guiding Lights men's homage did obtain,
Not even they emerged from this dark night,
But told their dreams, and fell asleep again.

CXXI

At dawn, when dews bedeck the tulip's face,
And violets their heavy heads abase,
I love to see the roses' folded buds,
With petals closed against the winds' disgrace.

CXXII

Ah! thou hast snared this head, though white as snow,
Which oft has vowed the wine-cup to forego;
And wrecked the mansion long resolve did build,
And rent the vesture penitence did sew!

CXXIII

I am not one whom Death doth much dismay,
Life's terrors all Death's terrors far outweigh;
This life, that Heaven hath lent me for a while,
I will pay back, when it is time to pay.

CXXIV

The stars, who dwell on heaven's exalted stage,
Baffle the wise diviners of our age;
  Take heed, hold fast the rope of mother wit,
These augurs all mistrust their own presage.

CXXV

Slaves of vain wisdom and philosophy,
Who toil at Being and Nonentity,
  Parching your brains till they are like dry grapes,
Be wise in time, and drink grape-juice, like me!

CXXVI

Sense, seeking happiness, bids us pursue
All present joys, and present griefs eschew;
  She says, we are not like the meadow grass,
Which, when they mow it down, springs up anew.

CXXVII

My comrades all are gone; Death, deadly foe,
Hath caught them one by one, and trampled low;
  They shared life's feast, and drank its wine with me,
But lost their heads, and dropped a while ago.

CXXVIII

When the great Founder moulded me of old,
He mixed much baser metal with my gold;
Better or fairer I can never be
Than when I issued from his heavenly mould.

CXXIX

The joyous souls who quaff potations deep,
And saints who in the mosque sad vigils keep,
Are lost at sea alike, and find no shore,
ONE only wakes, all others are asleep.

CXXX

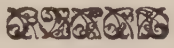
Small gains to learning on this earth accrue,
They pluck life's fruitage, learning who eschew;
Take pattern by the fools who learning shun,
And then perchance shall fortune smile on you.

CXXXI

Comrades! when e'er ye meet together here,
Recall your friend to mind, and drop a tear;
And when the circling wine-cups reach his seat,
Let one be overturned his dust to cheer.

CXXXII

Many have come, and run their eager race,
Striving for pleasures, luxuries, or place,
And quaffed their wine, and now all silent lie,
Enfolded in their parent earth's embrace.



RE

CXXXIII

HEAVEN multiplies our sorrows day by day,
And grants no joys it does not take away;
If those unborn could know the ills we bear,
What think you, would they rather come or stay?

CXXXIV

Why ponder thus the future to foresee,
And jade thy brain to vain perplexity?
Cast off thy care, leave Allah's plans to him,
He formed them all without consulting thee.

CXXXV

The tenants of the tombs to dust decay,
Nescient of self, and all beside are they;
  Their crumbling atoms float about the world,
Like mirage clouds, until the judgment-day.

CXXXVI

O soul! lay up all earthly goods in store,
Thy mead with pleasure's flowerets spangle o'er;
  And know 't is all as dew, that decks the flowers
For one short night, and then is seen no more!

CXXXVII

Heed not the Sunna, nor the law divine;
If to the poor his portion you assign,
  And never injure one, nor yet abuse,
I guarantee you heaven, and now some wine!

CXXXVIII

The world is baffled in its search for Thee,
Wealth cannot find Thee, no, nor poverty;
  All speak of Thee, but none have ears to hear,
Thou 'rt near to all, but none have eyes to see.

CXXXIX

Take care you never hold a drinking bout
With an ill-tempered, ill-conditioned lout;
He 'll make a vile disturbance all night long,
And vile apologies next day, no doubt.

CXL

The starry aspects are not all benign;
Why toil then after vain desires, and pine
To lade thyself with load of fortune's boons,
Only to drop it with this life of thine?

CXLI

I saw a busy potter by the way
Kneading with might and main a lump of clay;
And, lo! the clay cried, "Use me tenderly,
I was a man myself but yesterday!"

CXLII

Deep in the rondure of the heavenly blue,
There is a cup, concealed from mortals' view,
Which all must drink in turn; O sigh not then,
But drink it boldly, when it comes to you!

ZE

CXLIII

O HEART! this world is but a fleeting show,
Why should its empty griefs distress thee so?
Bow down and bear thy fate, the eternal pen
Will not unwrite its roll for thee, I trow!

CXLIV

Who e'er returned of all that went before,
To tell of that long road they travel o'er?
Leave naught undone of what you have to do,
For when you go, you will return no more.

CXLV

In taverns better far commune with Thee,
Than pray in mosques, and fail Thy face to see!
O first and last of all Thy creatures Thou;
'T is Thine to burn, and Thine to cherish me!

CXLVI

I flew here, as a wandering bird in aim
Up to a higher nest my course to frame;
But, finding here no guide who knows the way,
Fly out by the same door where through I came.

CXLVII

He binds us in resistless Nature's chain,
And yet bids us our natures to restrain;
Between these counter rules we stand perplexed,
"Hold the jar slant, but all the wine retain."

CXLVIII

They go away, and none is seen returning,
To teach that other world's recondite learning;
'T will not be shown for dull mechanic prayers,
For prayer is naught without true heartfelt yearning.

CXLIX

Go to! Cast dust on those deaf skies, who spurn
Thy orisons and bootless prayers, and learn
To quaff the cup, and hover round the fair;
Of all who go, did ever one return?

CL

Though Khayyám strings no pearls of righteous deeds,
Nor roots from out his soul sin's noisome weeds,
  Yet will he not despair of heavenly grace,
Seeing that ONE as two he ne'er misreads.

CLI

We are but chessmen, destined, it is plain,
That great chess player, Heaven, to entertain;
  It moves us on life's chess-board to and fro,
And then in death's box shuts us up again.

CLII

I put my lips to the cup, for I did yearn
The means of gaining length of days to learn;
  It leaned its lip to mine, and whispered low,
"Drink! for, once gone, you never will return."

SIN

CLIII

At Tús a bird perched in the ruined street
And on the skull of Káwús set his feet,
And thus he made his moan, "Alas, poor king!
Thy bells are hushed, thy drums have ceased to beat."

CLIV

What launched that golden orb his course to run,
What wrecks his firm foundations, when 't is done,
No man of science ever weighed with scales,
Nor made assay with touchstone, no, not one!

SHIN

CLV

I PRAY thee to my counsel lend thine ear,
Cast off this false hypocrisy's veneer;
This life a moment is, the next all time,
Sell not eternity for earthly gear!

CLVI

Khayyám! rejoice that wine you still can pour,
And still the charms of tulip cheeks adore;
You'll soon not be, rejoice then that you are,
Think how 't would be in case you were no more!

CLVII

Once, in a potter's shop, a company
Of cups in converse did I chance to see,
And lo! one lifted up his voice, and cried,
"Who made, who sells, who buys this pottery?"

CLVIII

Although the creeds number some seventy-three,
I hold with none but that of loving Thee;
What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin?
Thou 'rt all we need, the rest is vanity.

CLIX

Tell one by one my scanty virtues o'er;
As for my sins, forgive them by the score;
Let not my faults kindle Thy wrath to flame;
By blest Muhammad's tomb, forgive once more!

CLX

There is a chalice made with art profound,
With tokens of the Maker's favour crowned;
Yet the great Potter takes his masterpiece,
And dashes it to pieces on the ground!

FE

CLXI

IN truth wine is a spirit thin as air,
A limpid soul in the cup's earthen ware;
No dull dense person shall be friend of mine
Save wine-cups, which are dense and also rare.

KAF

CLXII

O WHEEL of heaven! no ties of bread you feel,
No ties of salt, you flay me like an eel!
A woman's wheel spins clothes for man and wife,
It does more good than you, O heavenly wheel!

CLXIII

Did no fair rose my paradise adorn,
I would make shift to deck it with a thorn;
And if I lacked my prayer-mats, beads, and Shaikh,
Those Christian bells and stoles I would not scorn.

CLXIV

"If heaven deny me peace and fame," I said,
"Let it be open war and shame instead;
The man who scorns bright wine had best beware,
I'll arm me with a stone, and break his head!"

CLXV

See! the dawn breaks, and rends night's canopy:
Arise! and drain a morning draught with me!
Away with gloom! full many a dawn will break
Looking for us, and we not here to see!

LAM

CLXVI

GIVE me my cup in hand, and sing a glee
In concert with the bulbuls' symphony;
Wine would not gurgle as it leaves the flask,
If drinking mute were right for thee and me!

CLXVII

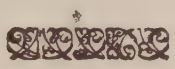
The "Truth" will not be shown to lofty thought,
Nor yet with lavished gold may it be bought;
Till self be mortified for fifty years,
From words to "states" of heart you'll not be brought.

CLXVIII

I solved all problems, down from Saturn's wreath
Unto this lowly sphere of earth beneath,
And leapt out free from bonds of fraud and lies,
Yea, every knot was loosed, save that of death!

CLXIX

Peace! the eternal "Has been" and "To be"
Pass man's experience, and man's theory;
In joyful seasons naught can vie with wine,
To all these riddles wine supplies the key!



MIM

CLXX

ALLAH, our Lord, is merciful, though just;
Sinner! despair not, but His mercy trust!
For though to-day you perish in your sins,
To-morrow He 'll absolve your crumbling dust.

CLXXI

Your course annoys me, O ye wheeling skies!
Unloose me from your chain of tyrannies!
If none but fools your favours may enjoy,
Then favour me, — I am not very wise!

CLXXII

When Khayyám quittance at Death's hand receives,
And sheds his outworn life, as trees their leaves,
  Full gladly will he sift this world away,
Ere dustmen sift his ashes in their sieves.

CLXXIII

This wheel of heaven, which makes us all afraid,
I liken to a lamp's revolving shade,
  The sun the candlestick, the earth the shade,
And men the trembling forms thereon portrayed.

CLXXIV

Who was it that did mix my clay? Not I.
Who spun my web of silk and wool? Not I.
  Who wrote upon my forehead all my good,
And all my evil deeds? In truth not I.

CLXXV

O let us not forecast to-morrow's fears,
But count to-day as gain, my brave compeers!
  To-morrow we shall quit this inn, and march
With comrades who have marched seven thousand
    years.

CLXXVI

Ne'er for one moment leave your cup unused!
Wine keeps heart, faith, and reason too, amused;
Had Iblis swallowed but a single drop,
To worship Adam he had ne'er refused!

CLXXVII

Ah! by these heavens, that ever circling run,
And by my own base lusts I am undone,
Without the wit to abandon worldly hopes,
And wanting sense the world's allures to shun!

CLXXVIII

On earth's green carpet many sleepers lie,
And hid beneath it others I descry;
And others, not yet come, or passed away,
People the desert of Nonentity!

CLXXIX

Sure of Thy grace, for sins why need I fear?
How can the pilgrim faint whilst Thou art near?
On the last day Thy grace will wash me white,
And make my "black record" to disappear.

CLXXX

Think not I dread from out the world to hie,
And see my disembodied spirit fly;
I tremble not at death, for death is true,
'T is my ill life that makes me fear to die!

CLXXXI

Let us shake off dull reason's incubus,
Our tale of days or years cease to discuss,
And take our jugs, and plenish them with wine,
Or ere grim potters make their jugs of us!

CLXXXII

How much more wilt thou chide, O raw divine,
For that I drink, and am a libertine?
Thou hast thy weary beads, and saintly show,
Leave me my cheerful sweetheart, and my wine!

CLXXXIII

Against my lusts I ever war, in vain,
I think of my ill deeds with shame and pain;
I trust Thou wilt assoil me of my sins,
But even so, my shame must still remain.

CLXXXIV

In these twin compasses, O Love, you see
One body with two heads, like you and me,
  Which wander round one centre, circlewise,
But at the last in that one point agree.

CLXXXV

We shall not stay here long, but while we do,
'T is folly wine and sweethearts to eschew;
  Why ask if earth etern or transient be?
Since you must go, it matters not to you.

CLXXXVI

In reverent sort to mosque I wend my way,
But, by great Allah, it is not to pray;
  No! but to steal a prayer-mat! When 't is worn,
I go again, another to purvey.

CLXXXVII

The world is false, so I 'll be false as well,
And with bright wine, and gladness ever dwell!
  They say, "May Allah grant thee penitence!"
He grants it not, and did he, I 'd rebel!

CLXXXVIII

When death shall tread me down and pluck me bare,
Like some fat capon, or poor chanticlere;
Then mould me to a cup, and fill with wine;
Its perfume will revive me then and there.

CLXXXIX

So far as this world's dealings I have traced,
I find its favours shamefully misplaced;
Allah be praised! I see myself debarred
From all its boons, and wrongfully disgraced.

CXC

'T is dawn! my heart with wine I will recruit,
And dash to bits the glass of good repute;
My long-extending hopes I will renounce,
And grasp long tresses, and the charming lute.

CXCI

Though I had sinned the sins of all mankind,
I know Thou would'st to mercy be inclined;
Thou sayest, "I will help in time of need:"
One needier than me where wilt Thou find?

CXCII

Am I a wine-bibber? What if I am?
Giaour, or infidel? Suppose I am?
Each sect miscalls me, but I heed them not,
I am my own, and, what I am, I am.

CXCIII

All my life long to drink I have not ceased,
And drink I will to-night on Kader's feast;
And throw my arms about the wine-jar's neck,
And kiss its lip, and clasp it to my breast!

CXCIV

I know what is, and what is not, I know
The lore of things above, and things below,
But all this lore will cheerfully renounce,
If one a higher lore than drink can show.

CXCV

Though I drink wine, I am no libertine,
Nor am I grasping, save of cups of wine;
I scruple to adore myself, like you;
For this cause to wine-worship I incline.

CXCVI

We make the wine-jar's lip our place of prayer,
And drink in lessons of true manhood there,
  And pass our lives in taverns, if perchance
The time misspent in mosques we may repair.

CXCVII

Man is the whole creation's summary,
The precious apple of great wisdom's eye;
  The circle of existence is a ring,
Whereof the signet is humanity.

CXCVIII

With fancies, as with wine, our heads we turn,
Aspire to heaven, and earth's low trammels spurn;
  But, when we drop this fleshly clog, 't is seen
From dust we came, and back to dust return.

CXCIX

I never drank of joy's sweet cordial,
But grief's fell hand infused a drop of gall;
  Nor dipped my bread in pleasure's piquant salt,
But briny sorrow made me smart withal!

CC

At dawn to tavern haunts I wend my way,
And with distraught Kalendars pass the day;
O Thou! who know'st things secret, and things known,
Grant me Thy grace, that I may learn to pray!

CCI

Never from worldly toils have I been free,
Never for one short moment glad to be!
I served a long apprenticeship to fate,
But yet of fortune gained no mastery.

CCII

One hand with Koran, one with wine-cup dight,
I half incline to wrong, and half to right;
The azure-marbled sky looks down on me
A sorry Moslem, yet not heathen quite.

CCIII

My critics call me a philosopher,
But Allah knows full well they greatly err;
I know not even what I am, much less
Why on this earth I am a sojourner!

CCIV

Quoth rose, "I am the Yusuf flower, I swear,
For in my mouth rich golden gems I bear:"
I said, "Show me another proof." Quoth she
"Behold this blood-stained vesture that I wear!"

CCV

I studied with the masters long ago,
And long ago did master all they know;
Hear now the end and issue of it all,
From earth I came, and like the wind I go!

CCVI

To find great Jamshed's world-reflecting bowl
I compassed sea and land, and viewed the whole;
But, when I asked the wary sage, I learned
That bowl was my own body, and my soul!

CCVII

Me, cruel Queen! you ever captivate,
From valiant knight to puny pawn translate;
And marshal all your force and ply your arts,
To take my castles, and myself checkmate!

CCVIII

If Allah wills me not to will aright,
How can I frame my will to will aright?
Each single act I will must needs be wrong,
Since none but He can make me will aright.

CCIX

Endure this world without my wine I cannot!
Drag on life's load without my cups I cannot!
I am the slave of that sweet moment, when
They say, "Take one more goblet," and I cannot!

NUN

CCX

MAKE light to me the world's oppressive weight,
And hide my failings from the people's hate,
And grant me peace to-day, and on the morrow
Deal with me as Thy mercy may dictate!

CCXI

Souls that are well informed of this world's state,
Its weal and woe with equal mind await,
For, be it weal we meet, or be it woe,
The weal doth pass, and woe too hath its date.

CCXII

Lament not fortune's want of constancy,
But up! and seize her favours ere they flee;
If fortune always cleaved to other men,
How could a turn of luck have come to thee?

CCXIII

Chief of old friends! hearken to what I say,
Let not heaven's treacherous wheel your heart dismay;
But rest contented in your humble nook,
And watch the games that wheel is wont to play.

CCXIV

Hear now Khayyám's advice, and bear in mind,
Consort with revellers, though they be maligned,
Cast down the gates of abstinence and prayer,
Yea, drink, and even rob, but, aye be kind!

CCXV

Have you no shame for all the sins you do,
Sins of omission and commission too?
Suppose you gain the world, you can but leave it,
You cannot carry it away with you!

CCXVI

Some look for truth in creeds, and forms, and rules;
Some grope for doubts or dogmas in the schools;
But from behind the veil a voice proclaims,
"Your road lies neither here nor there, O fools."

CCXVII

Had I the power great Allah to advise,
I'd bid him sweep away this earth and skies,
And build a better, where, unclogged and free,
The clear soul might achieve her high emprise.

CCXVIII

To drain the cup, to hover round the fair,
Can hypocritic arts with these compare?
If all who love and drink are going wrong,
There's many a wight of heaven may well despair!

CCXIX

'T is well in reputation to abide,
'T is shameful against heaven to rail and chide;
Still, head had better ache with over drink,
Than be puffed up with Pharisaic pride!

CCXX

O Lord! from self-conceit deliver me,
Sever from self, and occupy with Thee!
This self is captive to earth's good and ill,
Make me beside myself, and set me free!

CCXXI

Since all man's business in this world of woe
Is sorrow's pangs to feel, and grief to know,
Happy are they that never come at all,
And they that, having come, are first to go!

CCXXII

Nor you nor I can read the etern decree,
To that enigma we can find no key;
They talk of you and me *behind* the veil,
But, sweep that veil away, and where are *we?*

WAW

CCXXIII

O LOVE, for ever doth heaven's wheel design
To take away thy precious life, and mine;
Sit we upon this turf, 't will not be long
Ere turf shall grow upon my dust, and thine!

CCXXIV

Yon palace, towering to the welkin blue,
Where kings did bow them down, and homage do,
I saw a ringdove on its arches perched,
And thus she made complaint, "Coo Coo, Coo, Coo!"

CCXXV

We come and go, but for the gain, where is it?
And spin life's woof, but for the warp, where is it?
And many a righteous man has burned to dust
'Neath heaven's blue rondure, but their smoke, where is it?

CCXXVI

Such as I am, Thy power created me,
Thy care hath kept me for a century!
Through all these years I make experiment,
If my sins or Thy mercy greater be.

CCXXVII

"Take up thy cup and goblet, Love," I said,
"Haunt purling river bank, and grassy glade;
Full many a moon-like form has heaven's wheel
Oft into cup, oft into goblet, made!"

CCXXVIII

We buy new wine and old, our cups to fill,
And sell for two grains this world's good and ill;
Know you where you will go to after death?
Set wine before me, and go where you will!

CCXXIX

Was e'er man born who never went astray?
Did ever mortal pass a sinless day?
If I do ill, do not requite with ill!
Evil for evil how canst Thou repay?

CCXXX

Man, like a ball, hither and thither goes,
As fate's resistless bat directs the blows;
But He, who gives thee up to this rude sport,
He knows what drives thee, yea, He knows, He knows!

CCXXXI

Let not base avarice enslave thy mind,
Nor vain ambition in its trammels bind;
Be sharp as fire, as running water swift,
Not like earth's dust, the sport of every wind!

HE

CCXXXII

O THOU who hast done ill, and ill alone,
And thinkest to find mercy at the throne,
Hope not for mercy! for good left undone
Cannot be done, nor evil done undone!

CCXXXIII

These heavens, methinks, are like an o'erturned cup,
Whereto the wise with awe keep gazing up;
So o'er his love, the cup, the bottle stoops,
Feigning to kiss, and gives her blood to sup!

CCXXXIV

The drop wept for his severance from the sea,
But the sea smiled, for "I am all," said he,
"The Truth is all in all, there 's naught beside,
That one point circling apes plurality."

CCXXXV

Bulbuls, doting on roses, oft complain
How froward breezes rend their veils in twain;
Sit we beneath this rose, which many a time
Has dropped to earth, and sprung from earth again.

CCXXXVI

Alas! my wasted life has gone to wrack!
What with forbidden meats, and lusts, alack!
And leaving undone what 't was right to do,
And doing wrong, my face is very black!

CCXXXVII

I could repent of all, but of wine, never!
I could dispense with all, but with wine, never!
If so be I became a Musulman,
Could I abjure my Magian wine? no, never!

CCXXXVIII

We rest our hopes on Thy free grace alone,
Nor seek by merits for our sins to atone;
Mercy drops where it lists, and estimates
Ill done as undone, good undone as done.

CCXXXIX

O unenlightened race of humankind,
Ye are a nothing, built on empty wind!
Yea, a mere nothing, hovering in the abyss,
A void before you, and a void behind!

CCXL

Vain study of philosophy eschew!
Rather let tangled curls attract your view;
And shed the bottle's life-blood in your cup,
Or e'er death shed your blood, and feast on you.

YE

CCXLI

O HEART! canst thou the darksome riddle read,
Where wisest men have failed, wilt thou succeed?
Quaff wine, and make thy heaven here below,
Who knows if heaven above will be thy meed?

CCXLII

They that have passed away, and gone before,
Sleep in delusion's dust for evermore;
Go, boy, and fetch some wine, this is the truth,
Their dogmas were but air, and wind their lore!

CCXLIII

With many a snare Thou dost beset my way,
And threatenest, if I fall therein, to slay;
Thy rule resistless sways the world, yet Thou
Imputest sin, when I do but obey!

CCXLIV

To Thee, whose essence baffles human thought,
Our sins and righteous deeds alike seem naught;
  May Thy grace sober me, though drunk with sins,
And pardon all the ill that I have wrought!

CCXLV

O soul! could you but doff this flesh and bone,
You 'd soar a sprite about the heavenly throne;
  Had you no shame to leave your starry home,
And dwell an alien on this earthy zone?

CCXLVI

Ah, potter, stay thine hand! with ruthless art
Put not to such base use man's mortal part!
  See, thou art mangling on thy cruel wheel
Farídun's fingers, and Kai Khosrau's heart!

CCXLVII

From this world's kitchen toil not to obtain
Those dainties, seeming real, but really vain,
  Which greedy worldlings gorge to their own loss;
Renounce that loss, so loss shall prove thy gain!

CCXLVIII

Ah! would there were a place of rest from pain,
Which we, poor pilgrims, might at last attain,
And after many thousand wintry years,
Renew our life, like flowers, and bloom again!

CCXLIX

Winter is past, and spring-tide has begun,
Soon will the pages of life's book be done!
Well saith the sage, "Life is a poison rank,
And antidote, save grape-juice, there is none."

CCL

Last night I dashed my cup against a stone,
In a mad drunken freak, as I must own,
And lo! the cup cried out in agony,
"You too, like me, shall soon be overthrown."

CCLI

Open the door! O entrance who procurest,
And guide the way, O Thou of guides the surest!
Directors born of men shall not direct me,
Their counsel comes to naught, but Thou endurest!

CCLII

Give me a skin of wine, a crust of bread,
A pittance bare, a book of verse to read;
With thee, O love, to share my lowly roof,
I would not take the Sultan's realm instead!

CCLIII

Behold, where'er we turn our ravished eyes,
Sweet verdure springs, and crystal Kausars rise;
And plains, once bare as hell, now smile as heaven:
Enjoy this heaven with maids of Paradise!

CCLIV

When dawn doth silver the dark firmament,
Why shrills the bird of dawning his lament?
It is to show in dawn's bright looking-glass
How of thy careless life a night is spent.

CCLV

Cupbearer, come! from thy full-throated ewer
Pour blood-red wine, the world's despite to cure!
Where can I find another friend like wine,
So genuine, so solacing, so pure?

CCLVI

It chanced into a potter's shop I strayed,
He turned his wheel and deftly plied his trade;
And out of monarchs' heads, and beggars' feet,
Fair heads and handles for his pitchers made!

CCLVII

Who framed the lots of quick and dead but Thou?
Who turns the troublous wheel of heaven but Thou;
Though we are sinful slaves, is it for Thee
To blame us? Who created us but Thou?

CCLVIII

A Shaikh beheld a harlot, and quoth he,
"You seem a slave to drink and lechery;"
And she made answer, "What I seem I am,
But, Master, are you all you seem to be?"

CCLIX

If, like a ball, earth to my house were borne,
When drunk, I'd rate it at a barley-corn;
Last night they offered me in pawn for wine,
But the rude vintner laughed that pledge to scorn.

CCLX

Now in thick clouds Thy face Thou dost immerse,
And now display it in this universe;
  Thou the spectator, Thou the spectacle,
Sole to Thyself Thy glories dost rehearse.

CCLXI

Better to make one soul rejoice with glee,
Than plant a desert with a colony;
  Rather one freeman bind with chains of love,
Than set a thousand prisoned captives free!

CCLXII

Wherever you can get two maunds of wine,
Set to, and drink it like a libertine;
  Whoso acts thus will set his spirit free
From saintly airs like yours, and grief like mine.

CCLXIII

Yes! here am I with wine and feres again!
I did repent, but ah! 't was all in vain;
  Preach not to me of Noah and his flood,
But pour a flood of wine to drown my pain!

CCLXIV

Angel of joyful foot! the dawn is nigh;
Pour wine, and lift thy tuneful voice on high,
  Sing how Jamsheds and Khosraus bit the dust,
Whelmed by the rolling months, from Tir to Dai!

CCLXV

Oh that great Allah would rebuild these skies,
And earth, and that at once, before my eyes,
  And either rase my name from off his roll,
Or else relieve my dire necessities!

CCLXVI

Ah! brand, ah burning brand, foredoomed to burn
In fires of dread Gehennom in thy turn,
  Presume not to teach Allah clemency,
For who art thou to teach, or he to learn?

CCLXVII

I never would have come, had I been asked,
I would as lief not go, if I were asked,
  And, to be short, I would annihilate
All coming, being, going, were I asked!

CCLXVIII

A potter at his work I chanced to see,
Pounding some earth and shreds of pottery;
I looked with eyes of insight, and methought
'T was Adam's dust with which he made so free!

CCLXIX

No longer hug your grief and vain despair,
But in this unjust world be just and fair;
And since the substance of the world is naught,
Think *you* are naught, and so shake off dull care!

APPENDIX

COMPARATIVE STANZAS *of the* FITZGERALD, McCARTHY AND WHINFIELD VERSIONS

Also A BIBLIOGRAPHY *of the Foreign and English Translations*

COMPARATIVE STANZAS

of the FITZGERALD, McCARTHY AND WHINFIELD VERSIONS

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
i	Wake! For the Sun, who scatter'd into flight		
ii	Before the phantom of False morning died, ...	clxxxiii	
iii	And, as the Cock crew, those who stood before	ccccxix	
iv	Now the New Year reviving old Desires .	xci	cxiii lxix
v	Iram indeed is gone with all his Rose, . .		
vi	And David's lips are lockt; but in divine .	ccxlvii	xciii
vii	Come, fill the Cup, and in the fire of Spring	clxvii	
viii	Whether at Naishápúr or Babylon, . . .	cxlviii	lxxii
ix	Each Morn a thousand Roses brings, you say;	cccclxiii	ccxxxv
x	Well, let it take them! What have we to do	cccxc	
xi	With me along the strip of Herbage strown	clxxvii	xlvii
xii	A Book of Verses underneath the Bough .	cccxcviii ccccxlix	cclii
xiii	Some for the Glories of This World; and some	cclxvii cccxiv	lxii
xiv	Look to the blowing Rose about us — "Lo,"		cciv
xv	And those who husbanded the Golden grain, ...	cclxxvii	xciv
xvi	The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon		cxxxvi
xvii	Think, in this batter'd Caravanserai . .	cxl	xli
xviii	They say the Lion and the Lizard keep .	cli	xlii
xix	I sometimes think that never blows so red		lix

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
xx	And this reviving Herb whose tender Green	cxxiii	xxxvii
xxi	Ah, my Belovéd, fill the Cup that clears	cxciv	clxxv
xxii	For some we loved, the loveliest and the best		cxxxii cxxvii
xxiii	And we, that now make merry in the Room	clvi	xliii
xxiv	Ah, make the most of what we yet may spend, ...	ccclviii	ccxxiii
xxv	Alike for those who for TO-DAY prepare	ccccxxxiv	ccxvi
xxvi	Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd	cclii	lxxix ccxlii
xxvii	Myself when young did eagerly frequent	xl	cxlvi
xxviii	With them the seed of Wisdom did I sow		ccv
xxix	Into this Universe, and *Why* not knowing	li	xv
xxx	What, without asking, hither hurried *Whence?*	clxxxviii	lxiv lxxviii
xxxi	Up from Earth's Centre through the Seventh Gate		clxviii
xxxii	There was the Door to which I found no Key;	ii	ccxxii
xxxiii	Earth could not answer; nor the Seas that mourn		
xxxiv	Then of the THEE IN ME who works behind	ccxxvi	cxxxviii
xxxv	Then to the lip of this poor earthen Urn	cccxlv	clii
xxxvi	I think the Vessel, that with fugitive .	lxxiii	xx
xxxvii	For I remember stopping by the way .	ccxlv	cxli
xxxviii	And has not such a Story from of Old .	cclxx	cclxviii
xxxix	And not a drop that from our Cups we throw	clxx	cxiv

COMPARATIVE STANZAS

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
xl	As then the Tulip for her morning sup .	cii	
xli	Perplext no more with Human or Divine	lxiv lxxvii cclxxxiii	cxc
xlii	And if the Wine you drink, the Lip you press, ...	lxxxv[1]	
xliii	So when that Angel of the darker Drink		cxlii
xliv	Why, if the Soul can fling the Dust aside, ...	cccclxix	ccxlv
xlv	'T is but a Tent where takes his one day's rest	clxix	xlv
xlvi	And fear not lest Existence closing your	ccxxxv	lxxxvii
xlvii	When You and I behind the Veil are past, ...	ccx	
xlviii	A Moment's Halt — a momentary taste	clxv	lxxiii
xlix	Would you that spangle of Existence spend	xlvi	xiii
l	A Hair perhaps divides the False and True;		xiii
li	Whose secret Presence, through Creation's veins		
lii	A moment guess'd — then back behind the Fold	cccxlvi	cclx
liii	But if in vain, down on the stubborn floor	lxix	xxxi
liv	Waste not your Hour, nor in the vain pursuit	cclxxvi cccxxviii	xcix
lv	You know, my Friends, with what a brave Carouse	xx	cx
lvi	For "IS" and "IS-NOT" though with Rule and Line	cclxxvi	xcix

[1] See Variants of Stanza xlii for closer parallels.

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
lvii	Ah, but my Computations, People say .	xvii	
lviii	And lately, by the Tavern Door agape, .	ccclx	
lix	The Grape that can with Logic absolute .	cclxxxix	cviii
lx	The mighty Mahmúd, Allah-breathing Lord, ...		
lxi	Why, be this Juice the growth of God, who dare	lxxxiv	cxlvii
lxii	I must abjure the Balm of Life, I must .	cclxvii	
lxiii	Oh threats of Hell and Hopes of Paradise!		lxi
lxiv	Strange, is it not? that of the myriads who	lxxxi clx	cxliv cxlviii
lxv	The Revelations of Devout and Learn'd .		cxx
lxvi	I sent my Soul through the Invisible, .		lxvii
lxvii	Heav'n but the Vision of fulfill'd Desire, .	xcviii	li
lxviii	We are no other than a moving row . .	ccxxx	clxxiii
lxix	But helpless Pieces of the Game He plays	lxi	cli
lxx	The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes, ...		ccxxx
lxxi	The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ, ...	clix lxxxvi	cxliii xxiii
lxxii	And that inverted Bowl they call the Sky, ...	xxxix ccccxxxviii	liv ccxxxiii
lxxiii	With Earth's first Clay They did the Last Man knead, ...	lxxxvi	xxiii
lxxiv	YESTERDAY *This* Day's Madness did prepare;	clxxx	xlviii
lxxv	I tell you this — When, started from the Goal, ...	ccxix	lxxvi
lxxvi	The Vine had struck a fibre: which about		
lxxvii	And this I know: whether the one True Light	lxxxvii	cxlv

COMPARATIVE STANZAS

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
lxxviii	What! out of senseless Nothing to provoke	cxii	lvi
lxxix	What! from His helpless Creature be repaid	clxxxix	
lxxx	Oh Thou, who didst with pitfall and with gin	ccxcvi	ccxliii
lxxxi	Oh Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make, ...		
lxxxii	As under cover of departing Day . . .	cccxciii	cclvi
lxxxiii	Shapes of all Sorts and Sizes, great and small, ...	cxv cccxciii	cclvi
lxxxiv	Said one among them — "Surely not in vain"	ccclxiii	
lxxxv	Then said a second — "Ne'er a peevish Boy"	c	xxiv
lxxxvi	After a momentary silence spake . . .	cccxliv	cclvii lxxi
lxxxvii	Whereat some one of the loquacious Lot —	cxv	clvii
lxxxviii	"Why," said another, "Some there are who tell".	cclxxxi	cvii
lxxxix	"Well," murmur'd one, "Let whoso make or buy,"	cxxv	clxxxviii
xc	So while the Vessels one by one were speaking		
xci	Ah, with the Grape my fading Life provide, ...	viii cliv	iv lxxv
xcii	That ev'n my buried Ashes such a snare	xxvii	x
xciii	Indeed the Idols I have loved so long .	cclxxxvii	lxxxviii
xciv	Indeed, indeed, Repentance oft before .	cclv xii	cxxii
xcv	And much as Wine has play'd the Infidel, ...		cxix
xcvi	Yet Ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!	ccxxiii	lxxxiii

FitzGerald		McCarthy	Whinfield
xcvii	Would but the Desert of the Fountain yield	ccccxl	ccxlviii
xcviii	Would but some wingéd Angel ere too late	ccccxlviii	cclxv
xcix	Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire	ccclxxviii	ccxvii
c	Yon rising Moon that looks for us again—	ix xlvii	v
ci	And when like her, oh Sákí, you shall pass	civ	cxvi cxxxi

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[1] Eastern Pearls, by the Persian Cynic poet, Omar Khayyám.

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS.

EDWARD FITZGERALD'S VERSIONS.

FIRST EDITION.

Rubáiyát || of || Omar Khayyám, || the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. || Translated into English Verse. || London: || Bernard Quaritch, || Castle Street, Leicester Square. || 1859.

On the verso: G. Norman, Printer, Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, London.

Small quarto. Brown paper wrappers. 75 quatrains. 22 notes.

The Same, privately reprinted at Madras, 1862, together with a note by Garcin de Tassy and an article by Prof. E. B. Cowell, with a few additional quatrains.

The Same, a type fac-simile of the first edition, privately printed by Thomas J. Wise in the Ashley Library Series. London. 1887.

Quarto. 25 copies on Dutch paper and 4 on vellum.

SECOND EDITION.

Rubáiyát || of || Omar Khayyám, || the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. || Rendered into English Verse. || Second Edition. || London: || Bernard Quaritch, || Piccadilly. || 1868.

(John Childs and Sons, Printers.) Quarto. Paper wrappers. 110 quatrains. 25 notes.

THIRD EDITION.

Rubáiyát || of || Omar Khayyám, || the Astronomer-Poet of Persia, || Rendered into English Verse. || Third Edition. || London: || Bernard Quaritch, || Piccadilly. || 1872.

Quarto, half Roxburghe, maroon cloth. 101 quatrains.

FOURTH EDITION.

Rubáiyát || of || Omar Khayyám || and the Salámán and Absál || of || Jámi; || Rendered into English Verse || Bernard Quaritch; 15 Piccadilly, London, 1879.

Fcap. 4to, half Roxburghe. 101 quatrains.

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FIFTH EDITION.

Letters || and || Literary Remains || of || Edward FitzGerald || Edited by | William Aldis Wright || in Three Volumes. || London: || Macmillan and Co. || and New York. || 1889. *All Rights reserved.*

Crown 8vo. Text in volume 3. 101 quatrains.

The Same, reprinted separately, London: Macmillan and Co., and New York. 1890. Fifth Edition with variations of the preceding editions.

PIRATED EDITION.

Omar Khayyám. The Rubáiyát Translated into English Verse. London. John Campbell, Jun. 1883.

(Printed for Henry Quilter and his friends. The first leaf bears the inscription: "To the Translator, with the Printer's thanks and apologies.")

ASHENDENE EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Naishápúr, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. Rendered into English Verse. C. H. St. John Hornby. Ashendene Press, 1896.

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The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. Rendered into English Verse by Edward FitzGerald. Decorated by W. B. Macdougall. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1898.

Quarto. Text of First Edition without translator's Introduction or Notes. Border decorations by Octave Lacour. Édition de luxe, limited to 1000 copies.

GOLDEN TREASURY EDITION.

Text of the Fifth Edition. London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., New York: The Macmillan Co. 1899.

Sq. 16mo.

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

FOUR-TEXT EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. Rendered into English Verse by Edward FitzGerald. Texts of the Four Editions with the Original Prefaces and Notes. London: Macmillan and Co. 1899.

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AMERICAN EDITIONS OF FITZGERALD'S TRANSLATION.

FIRST AMERICAN.

Rubáiyát || of || Omar Khayyám, || the Astronomer-Poet of Persia. || Rendered into English Verse. || First American || From the Third London Edition || Boston: || James R. Osgood and Company, || Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood & Company. || 1878.

Sq. 16mo.

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Medium 8vo. 150 copies on Japan paper. 2 on Vellum.

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STODDARD PRIVATE EDITION.

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100 copies, 8vo.

MOSHER BIBELOT EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, Printed for Thomas B. Mosher and published by Him, Portland, Maine, 1894.

Narrow Fcap. 8vo. 725 copies on Van Gelder paper and 25 copies on Japan vellum. (Out of print.)

MOSHER OLD WORLD EDITION.

Text of First, Second, and Fourth Editions, with sonnet by Rosamund Mariott Watson; toast by Theodore Watts; biography of FitzGerald by W. Irving Way, etc.

Narrow Fcap. 8vo. 925 copies; 100 on Japan vellum, 1895.

BRADLEY EDITION.

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Sq. 12mo, bds.

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

ST. PAUL EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, Printed for E. W. Porter Co., St. Paul, Minn. 1895.

Sq. 12mo, bds. 750 numbered copies on hand-made paper.

The Same, on imitation hand-made paper. 1897.

CROWELL EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám and the Salámán and Absál of Jámí, Rendered into English Verse by Edward FitzGerald. New York and Boston. 1896.

Sq. 12mo. Text of First and Fifth editions, with variations and notes.

VARIORUM EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, English, French and German translations, comparatively arranged in accordance with the text of Edward FitzGerald's version. With biographies, bibliography, etc. Edited by Nathan Haskell Dole. In Two Volumes. Joseph Knight and Co. Boston. 1896.

MULTI-VARIORUM EDITION.

The Same, with Italian and Dutch translations added; and with fuller annotations, bibliography, etc. Two volumes L. C. Page and Co., Boston. 1897.

DODGE EDITION.

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Sq. 12mo. Paper wrappers.

Same. De luxe edition.

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First, Second and Fifth Editions Edited by Nathan Haskell Dole. Illustrated by Gilbert James and Edmund H. Garrett. Boston, L. C. Page & Co. 1898.

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Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. Being a Reprint of FitzGerald's Fourth English Translation. With page decorations from original designs by Blanche McManus.

Introduction and Notes omitted. New York, 1898.

Fcap. 4to, bds.

DEPARTMENT STORE EDITION.

Text of the Fourth Edition, without Introduction or Notes. Boston, 1898.

Sq. 16mo, cloth.

ROYCROFT EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: Being the FitzGerald Version of 1879. The Roycroft Shop, East Aurora, New York, 1898.

Nine hundred and ten copies hand illumined, with a few additional copies specially illumined.

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Text of Fourth Edition, with foot-notes and an original introduction. New York, 1898.

Sq. 12mo. Pamphlet.

RUBÁIYÁT OF OMAR KHAYYÁM

CRITIC EDITION.

Reprint of text of the Fourth Edition, from the Critic of December, 1898. New York, 1898.

Sq. 16mo. Pamphlet.

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Edward FitzGerald's Omar Khayyám with a Prose Translation from the French of J. B. Nicolas, and an Introduction by James B. Scott. Los Angeles, C. C. Parker, 1899.

Text of Fourth Edition. Narrow 16mo, paper bds. 500 copies.

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Narrow 16mo.

PRIVATELY PRINTED EDITION.

Rubáiyát of || Omar Khayyám || Portland, Maine. || Privately Printed || 1899.

Quarto. Unpaged. Full vellum. Silk ties.

Text of the Fourth, with minor variants of the Fifth edition. T. B. M. & E. B. G. Portland, Maine. May, 1899.

"Ten copies and no more, printed on pure vellum."

MANSFIELD EDITION.

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám. Text of Fourth Edition, with an Address by Hon. H. H. Asquith. New York, Mansfield. 1899.

32mo. Leather. 500 copies.

THE "VADEMECUM" EDITION.

Text of Fourth Edition without FitzGerald's name. Philadelphia, Altemus. (1899.)

16mo, cloth.

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Text of Fourth Edition, New York. A. Grosset & Co. (1899.) Narrow 12mo. Green wrapper and envelope.

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EDWARD HERON-ALLEN.

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CHARLES PEREZ MURPHY.

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